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ABSTRACT

This case study documents the experiences of a Peace Corps volunteer who worked as a Youth Development volunteer with disadvantaged institutionalized youth in Honduras. Youth Development volunteers provide direct services in the areas of vocational education, recreational programming, informal education, and counseling. Many are assigned to residential youth centers for homeless, abused, or abandoned children, where they work closely with host-country counterparts. Each volunteer should develop a deliberate and well-informed practice theory based on both research in the field of child development and personal experience. Most residential programs for homeless youth are total institutions where children are isolated from family and peers. Such institutions often aggravate the problems of the youth they were designed to help. Public education could provide needed social interaction, but most disadvantaged youth require special assessment and remedial support to overcome learning disabilities. Vocational education programs should be a major part of the residential program; however, income-generating projects that use student labor must be approached with caution. Recreation and leisure skills are also important to healthy child development. The following special programs are described: (1) gardens and small animal projects; (2) youth empowerment projects; (3) libraries; (4) reading programs; (5) fund raising; (6) environmental education; (7) clubhouses; and (8) sibling care. Three illustrations are included. A 44-item bibliography is appended. (FMW)

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Youth Development:

A Case Study from Honduras

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Youth Development:

A Case Study from Honduras

by

Jay Boll

United States Peace Corps
Information Collection and Exchange
R0074
December 1989

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

For what it's worth, I dedicate this publication to my mother, Constance, and my counterpart, Dylcia de Ochoa: two women whose work with children has inspired me to do more than I ever thought I could have. Thanks and appreciation are also due to my two program managers, Alejandro Corpeño and Angela Johnston.

Preface

Many Peace Corps Volunteers become involved in working with young people on either a formal or informal basis. Some Volunteers work full-time in youth development projects, while many more work in their spare time with children or adolescents in the neighborhoods where they live. Recorded personal experiences of Volunteers working in this field can help to give new Volunteers direction in their tasks and the challenges which they face.

The following case study documents the experiences of one Youth Development Volunteer who, although he had no experience working with youth before he started his project, developed a love and concern for young people which later led him to pursue this field in his graduate studies. This case study began as a Volunteer reflecting on his completed youth work in Honduras. What the author, Jay Boll, knew at that point had been acquired through his own experiences, and reflected his own thoughts and beliefs. As he delved further into his graduate studies, however, he developed a theoretical framework to clarify and build on his experiences. Both the Volunteer experience and the theoretical underpinnings are now represented in the case study.

The opinions and techniques elaborated here are not necessarily sanctioned by the Peace Corps or the Office of Training and Program Support as a model for organizing or operating youth programs. We offer this case study, rather, as an example from which Volunteers may get ideas and begin to learn, in order to enhance their own professional growth as Youth Development workers.

We would be very happy to hear about your experiences working in youth development, whether in the form of project reports, plans or ideas, so we can build the body of information available to share with future Peace Corps Volunteers.

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INTRODUCTION

This case study was written in 1987, during my final six months of Peace Corps service. It has been extensively revised since that time, in order to improve its readability and to include some new ideas and changed beliefs. While it is primarily intended as an information resource for volunteers in Youth Development, it may also be of use to Peace Corps trainers, APCD's, and other persons working with youths.

As one of the first volunteers to work with homeless youths, I had the opportunity to witness and partake in the initiation of the current program for Youth Development. My assignment in Youth Development lasted for a total of five years, from 1982 through 1987. During this time, I worked with a single project in Honduras: the Centro San Juan Bosco, a residential program for 'street kids' and other disadvantaged children. I also participated with APCD's in the expansion of Peace Corps/Honduras' Youth Development program. My involvement at the Centro San Juan Bosco covered the areas of program administration and project development, vocational instruction, informal education, small business development, informal counseling and behavior modification, fund raising, policy making, and community relations. For a period of three years I lived with the youths at the center and thus was able to participate more fully in the life of this program.

In this study, I have attempted to convey the essence of my experiences at the Centro San Juan Bosco: what I did and what I learned, during my assignment. Most of the information here included is based on personal experience and exchange of ideas with other volunteers. I do not pretend to be an authority on the subject of helping needy children. But I have had considerable experience working and living with children of the street. I hope that this experience, as reported in this study, may benefit other volunteers.

The methods and ideas described in this case study are largely gathered from my personal experiences at the Centro San Juan Bosco. They are based on what I have found to be the most effective approaches to working with disadvantaged children. I realize that these same approaches may not always be appropriate for all volunteers in all countries of the Peace Corps world. With this study, I have merely tried to provide an example of what may be accomplished by volunteers in Youth Development. I do not pretend to have been always successful in my role as a Peace Corps youth promoter. Whatever knowledge I now possess was gained as a result of many mistakes and personal failures, as well as some considerable successes. My hope is that other volunteers will learn from these experiences and use this information, as they see fit, for the benefit of young people around the world.

As for the organization of this document, it includes chapters on: child development and behavior, education, vocational preparation, leisure skills and recreation, institutional life, and special activities for youth promoters. A resource list of relevant information materials is also included at the end. Most of the information provided in this study is practical in nature. However, the chapter on child development and behavior, and parts of others, deal with the theoretical aspects of child development and helping relationships. I have included this theoretical information so youth promoters will be aware of the many factors which influence and affect the behavior of children. I also hope that these explanations will convince generalist volunteers of the need for developing a practice theory for working with children.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

Youth Development

Although Peace Corps volunteers have been working with youths, youth groups, and youth institutions for a number of years, these activities have only recently received formal recognition as a distinct program of the Peace Corps. I am in no position to speak for the Peace Corps regarding its policies or program initiatives. But as I saw my role as youth promoter, my principal mission was to help provide decent life opportunities to a class of unfortunate children who had been neglected, exploited, or simply overlooked by everyone else. This, I think, is the essence of much of the present work in Youth Development.

The current program in Youth Development comprises three distinct categories of Peace Corps service: 1) work with youths in institutional settings (most commonly, residential programs and orphanages), 2) outreach work with street children, not yet attached to any institution or formal program, and 3) community work with youth-serving groups, such as the YMCA, Junior Achievement, 4-H clubs, and Scouting. The focus of this study is on the first category of Youth Development service, most prevalent in the Peace Corps Inter American Region, with some attention to the second.

Youth Development volunteers who work in institutional settings are typically involved in the provision of direct services, in the areas of vocational education, recreational programming, informal education, and counseling. Many volunteers have also had roles in program administration, project development and staff training. In the OTAPS document, "Peace Corps Youth Development Initiative: Overview and Recommendations", Gary Barker (an ex-volunteer who served in Honduras), adds youth advocacy and policy development to the list of appropriate activities for youth promoters.

Third World Youth In Crisis

Many volunteers in Youth Development are assigned to work with residential youth centers. These are live-in programs for the care and education of homeless, abused, and abandoned children. Youth centers exist because too many children have nowhere else to turn for help. The organization Childhope estimates that twenty percent of children in the developing world are neglected, abandoned, homeless, or abused. Mere statistics do not begin to tell the story. The signs of this massive social disaster are right there on the city streets, where so many of these "statistics" live.

They sleep on sidewalks, benches, and under bridges. They are sickly, dirty, and inadequately clothed. They survive by shining shoes, begging, and stealing. These are children living on their own. They are exploited, abused, deprived of education and basic human comforts. In a sense, many of them are runaways... but not really. Society and their parents have treated them more like 'throwaways'.

It is hard to imagine how these children manage to survive while living in the street. They can cherish but little hope for a decent future and at times they must suffer very much. Respite from hunger and protection from the elements are their principal concerns. In addition to these hardships, they must also contend with the ill effects of faltering health, street violence, and harassment by law enforcement officials. With no opportunities to obtain a decent education or legitimate work skills, they rapidly fall into patterns of delinquency. These children learn at an early age to beg, steal, and prostitute their bodies. They may also resort to abuse of alcohol, glue, and other addictive substances in order to escape the misery of their lives.

The presence on the streets of these forsaken children is only the tip of the iceberg. These are the most extreme cases, and also the most visible. But there are many more children, living with their families, who are just as much in need of help. When children take to the streets as a place of refuge, it is usually because of an unendurable home situation. Street life, with all its risks and hardships, is at least preferable to death by starvation, gross neglect, or family violence. In the worst cases, children of dysfunctional parents are literally tortured or sexually abused. Some children are simply not fed or are left to die of treatable illnesses. Others are exploited as a source of family income and are gradually drawn to the culture of the street.

There are many explanations of why children leave home to live on the streets. Chief among these are poverty and disintegration of the family. The latter occurrence -- the disintegration of the family -- comprises a variety of different economic, social, and cultural factors. Poverty can be a cause in and of itself, but it is also rooted in other factors. In truth, there is no single cause of homelessness in children. The problem is an 'ecological' one. Economic hardship, urban immigration, irresponsible parenting, and social ideas such as caste and **machismo**, all contribute to the occurrence of child abuse and abandonment in the developing world. These factors do not exist independently of one another. Economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities in rural areas are major causes of urban immigration. Crowding in cities and the proliferation of crime and vice, in turn, erode traditional family values. At the same time, cultural attitudes of **machismo** can result in irresponsible parenting and the abandonment of the family by the male. Mothers are left with the burden of raising children in an urban environment, without the traditional supports of an extended family. These women, in turn, will be tempted to abandon their children. Each factor is a function of the others. Together, they act on one another to create a vicious circle of child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

Most families in the developing world are conceived in poverty. For the children of these families, life is begun at a great disadvantage. Unemployed or underemployed parents may lack the means to buy their children clothing, food, and medicine. Even if there is money for school supplies and uniforms, older children may be deprived of an education, as they care for younger siblings while parents work. Or the children may also have to work -- on the family plot of land or the streets of the city.

Many families migrate to the city in search of a better way of life. What they often find is more poverty, a lack of promised services, unbearable crowding, and a disintegration of traditional cultural values. Children forced to work outside of the home are often exposed to numerous risks. City streets make for an unhealthy learning environment. There, children may observe and experience some of the worst behaviors of civilization: prostitution, violence, organized crime, and substance abuse. Girls on the street are particularly at risk. They may become the sexual prey of unscrupulous males and are often coerced into prostitution.

Irresponsible parenting aggravates a family's poverty. Many parents fail to practice family planning. The result is more offspring than parents can raise or properly feed. Because of this, older children must leave home or earn their keep by contributing to the family income and helping to care for younger siblings.

In Latin American cultures, the prevailing attitudes about **machismo** (which goes by other names in other cultures), are partially responsible for a high incidence of irresponsible parenting. **Machismo** is a cultural value which attaches inordinately high importance to the concept of masculinity. The quality of **machismo** in any male is measured in part by his sexual virility, including multiple fathering and marital infidelity. In such cultures, men may feel compelled to prove their masculinity by impregnating numerous women, settling disputes by acts of violence, and engaging in other traditional masculine behaviors, such as gambling and drinking. This value system is responsible for much family violence, as well as an overproliferation of offspring and the occurrence of single parent families. The **macho** male who brags of having fourteen children by five different women is responsible for having created at least four single parent families. In such families, both mother and children will have to work to support themselves. Often, it is the children who are called on to fulfill an absent father's responsibilities.

The values of **machismo** encourage men to have children by many different women. Consequently, some men abandon their families in order to establish new ones with other women. These women may have children by another union, and these children are often rejected by the new man of the, house. Many of the children I worked with at the Centro San Juan Bosco were there because they had been abused or turned away by new stepfathers, who would not tolerate their presence in the home. Some women will even tolerate this abuse -- both sexual and physical -- of their original children, in order to keep a man in the house.

Alcoholism is another common cause of child abuse. Poverty, unemployment, and low self-esteem contribute to alcoholism in both mothers and fathers (and inversely, alcoholism aggravates all these conditions). The alcoholic parent may be emotionally unstable or violent to begin with. When intoxicated, the danger of child abuse is greatly increased. Parents abuse their children to compensate for their own feelings of helplessness, to release frustration and hostility, and because they, too, were abused as children. They may also drink for similar reasons. This combination of violence and alcoholism makes for a potentially dangerous home situation.

Not all alcoholics abuse their children. Even so, the effects of alcoholism on the family are often disastrous. Money, which might otherwise be used to purchase food, is often squandered on drinking and related behaviors. Alcoholic parents may be unable to hold a job, and in such cases it is often the children who assume responsibility for the support of their parents.

Children who live in conditions of extreme poverty, abuse, and neglect may be tempted to leave their families to search for a better life on the city streets. For many children, street culture is a positive alternative to family life. They can beg, or steal, or work, and somehow manage to satisfy their basic human needs. The hardships and risks they endure in the street are often not as bad as the abuse they would otherwise suffer at the hands of their parents.

Surely a social problem of this order -- when young children can find a better way of life on the mean city streets than with their families -- must not be allowed to continue. Yet the problem persists -- even in our own United States. And it probably won't change anytime soon. In the meantime, programs must exist for the care of these children. The Peace Corps program for Youth Development has begun to address this need.

Categories of At-Risk Children

The classification of children according to their behavior or position in society is generally a practice to avoid. Youth workers should be wary of labelling children. A label such as 'street kid' says very little about the individual child to whom it is applied. It may have different meanings to different people, but its connotation is essentially negative. Such terms are society's way of defining these children as the problem, rather than the victims of a problem.

This case study, however, makes frequent use of these same labels, as a matter of convenience and simplicity of style. Labels can be useful for facilitating communication among professionals. But I hope the reader will remember that behind every label there is an individual child, whose situation, needs, character, and desires are entirely unique and unclassifiable.

Children of the Street: These are homeless children whose primary world -- the place where they live, work, play, and learn -- is a city street. Most of them have a family somewhere; they may even have regular contact with their parents. But they live and sleep away from home on a regular basis. They may support themselves by begging, stealing, shining shoes, and prostitution. Adult supervision is lacking in their lives. Consequently, they adopt many of the typical street behaviors: substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, petty crime, and aggressive acting out. They do not attend school, but what they lack in formal education, they make up for in street smarts. By societal standards, they may seem irresponsible. In fact, they have learned responsibility at a very early age -- for themselves and sometimes for their families. These children tend to be quite manipulative and are sometimes aggressive, even violent. Yet most of them do not fit the common stereotype of the prematurely hardened, suspicious, emotionally stunted street tough. In my experience, many of them have endearing personalities, are affectionate, trusting of adults, and remarkably friendly. They may, however, resist overtures of help from outside sources. They seem to value freedom above most other qualities, and will often reject the regimentation of institutional life. Sadly, many of them are content to live the way they do.

Street Vendors: These are children "on" the street. They differ from street kids in that they sleep at home more nights than not. But both groups of children share similar kinds of problems. Due to the poverty of their families or parental irresponsibility, they take to the streets in search of income -- shining shoes, selling food, or begging money. Some of them work for only part of the day, in order to attend school in the morning or afternoon. They may begin to work at the age of six or seven, and the majority of them, it seems, are girls. This class of children are exposed to many of the same risks experienced by street kids, but to a lesser degree. The risk for girls is especially high. The transition from working in the street to living in the street often occurs over time. For this reason, it is important to reach them in the early stages of vagrancy, before they are completely lost to the street environment. It is usually possible to help these children in non-institutional settings. On the whole, they are a rewarding group to work with: independent, but at the same time cooperative and very receptive to helping gestures.

Orphans: Actually, only a small percentage of the children living in the traditional orphanage environment are really orphans, in the sense of having no living parents. Most of them have been abandoned by their parents at a very early age, and some of them remain in touch with family members while growing up in the institution. Orphaned and abandoned children present a particular challenge to youth promoters. They are not as independent or self-sufficient as the typical street kid, yet they have no family to turn to for support. Most of them spend their entire childhood in an institution. As a result, they may lose touch with the world outside the orphanage. They generally lack the street kid's fighting spirit and instinct for survival. They may also lack individuality, due to the depersonalizing effects of an entire life lived in institutions. Most of them are starved for affection -- especially those who have had no contact with their natural parents. On the whole, they may be easier to work with than other groups of children, but they are sometimes fatalistic and harder to motivate.

Abused Children: Abused children are generally a difficult group to work with, because their problems tend to be emotional, as well as social and economic. The effects of abuse -- either physical, emotional, or sexual -- can be psychologically devastating. Physical scars nay heal in time, but the damage to a child's personality is sometimes irreversible. Youth institutions around the world are full of such children. The problem for most youth promoters is that they do not possess the therapeutic skills to cope with the special emotional problems of children who have been severely abused. It is impossible to predict how these children will behave as individuals. Some are reserved, some are aggressive, and some have lost touch with reality. The one thing they have in common is their need to be loved and handled with care.

Programs Serving Youths

The presence of children living in the streets and fending for themselves is an intolerable occurrence in any nation. This phenomenon constitutes a heavy burden on the society, and obviously represents a terrible waste of human life. Few of these children will grow up to be productive members of society. The best they can hope to be are menial laborers: laundresses and peddlers. At worst, they become nothing at all -- they die before they come of age. The developing world cannot afford to pay this price in wasted human potential. For those countries which do not act to remedy this situation, the cost will only escalate.

In many countries, programs have emerged to tend to the needs of dispossessed children. There are now many such programs around the world. Youth centers may differ in their particular approach to problems, but they all have a common mission: to aid the children that everyone else has neglected or abandoned.

A major part of this mission involves the provision of basic human services, such as health care, shelter, and nutrition. But the best youth centers tender more than just relief and protection. They offer children hope for the future. Most of these kids have learned not to hope. The purpose of the center is to help them learn to hope again. This can only happen if they are shown a better prospect for the future. The youth center, then, is a place where hope is possible.

Hope is provided in the form of concrete services, such as formal education, vocational preparation, development of leisure skills, and moral supervision, with an emphasis on the child's self-image and personal development. The purpose of these activities is to bolster their self-esteem, as well as to teach them basic living skills.

Though centers are bound by a common mission, there is considerable difference in their treatment approaches. Some centers have a religious orientation, while others are administered by the state and are non-sectarian. The financial supporters and directors of a program tend to determine its orientation. Many centers have a strong emphasis on formal education or vocational preparedness; others focus on children's behavior and social adjustment.

There are also many different types of centers: centers for vagrant street kids, for child workers, for orphans, and for the victims of child abuse. Program populations differ in terms of age and gender, and services they require, but some centers mix these populations. Of the many youth centers currently operating around the world, five basic types can be distinguished:

1) day-care centers for working children who live with their parents and are in need of basic social services, such as nutrition, education and primary health care.
2) orphanages for abandoned children.
3) residential centers for homeless children and children at risk of delinquency.
4) temporary residential centers where children are held for observation, prior to placement in a permanent setting or situation.

5) custodial centers for delinquent youths.

These types of centers can be further distinguished as those which are administered by a public agency and those which are privately supported. Public institutions tend to employ more professional staff than private agencies (doctors, psychologists, and social workers). For this reason, they also tend to be more bureaucratic. Private agencies tend to be better organized, employ more foreign staff, and are generally more innovative than the public institutions. But they may not be subject to the same controls as programs administered by the state, and in some cases this is very unfortunate. Private programs also tend to rely on individual personalities to give them direction, a trend which results in difficult transitions from one administration to the next.

Volunteer Roles in Youth Development

Youth development is about caring for children, sharing experiences, and providing opportunities for growth and self-enrichment. According to volunteers with whom I have spoken, youth development is:

> "...a wide variety of things, such as educational and recreational activities for kids, counseling them, giving them adult guidance, providing them with an adequate learning or social environment. The role of the volunteer is to guide kids socially, morally, educationally, befriend them, share with them and play with them."

> "...basically teaching kids how to better themselves, their families and the future of (the world). Youth Development volunteers fit into the picture by helping to create programs that develop the child as a whole... or just be a part of a kid's life."

> "...teaching youths to think for themselves... My role as a Youth Development volunteer is as a role model, teaching them how to think for themselves (and) develop a positive attitude about the world as well as themselves."

> "...caring about young people and doing what you can to make their lives just a little bit better. It is something like being a parent -- wanting the best for the children you love and care about."

All the volunteers in this program agree that youth development work requires a high level of personal commitment. The rewards for this commitment are a high degree of personal satisfaction, sharing of growth experiences, and affection of the children whose lives they touch.

In the opinion of most volunteers, youth development is more an attitude than a programed activity. Youth promoters tend not to assess their effectiveness in terms of quantifiable accomplishments (number of children served, projects implemented, or money raised). Rather, they measure their success by the strength of their relationships with the children of a center and the impact they have had on each young life. Youth Development volunteers may assume the role of teacher, social worker, counselor, or guardian. But for the most part, they define themselves as people who care about children.

Youth promoters tend to work in the following areas of development: basic child care, informal education, vocational preparation, leisure skills, counseling, small business development, and program development. They may also be involved in public advocacy, fund-raising, program administration, and staff development. Assignments in youth development generally involve the provision of basic social services. Because of this, the personal attitudes of the individual volunteer and level of commitment count for just as much as her specific skills and competencies. For the volunteer who works with children, common sense, patience, and concern are better qualifications that a masters degree in education or social work.

The typical youth promoter is a generalist, with some background in social services. The lack of specialization is often a desirable trait, as it gives a volunteer the flexibility to adapt to many different roles within a project. Specialized knowledge is not a requirement for motivated individuals who have a genuine interest in helping youths. A professional attitude and concern for children can compensate for a lack of practical experience. The most valuable skill which any volunteer can bring to her project is the ability to communicate and identify with children.

It is most essential that each youth promoter be obviously and sincerely concerned about the children with whom she works. She should be compassionate yet objective; tolerant, patient, fair, but also stern when a situation calls for sternness. She should enjoy playing -- a high energy level and a good sense of humor are important qualities for any youth promoter -- yet be serious about her work.

At the beginning of an assignment, it is important to earn the respect of children in a center, as well as that of counterparts. Children respect qualities of honesty, fairness, strength, and consistency in adults. Affection and concern may win a child's heart, but these qualities do not automatically lead to respect -- and without respect (in addition to trust and affection), the youth promoter will not be very effective in her work with these children. The youth promoter must avoid being manipulated. At times it is necessary to be suspicious or unbelieving -- especially at the start of an assignment

The key to success in working with children is to love them and care for them. The children of these centers thrive on attention and affection. They are also excellent judges of sincerity. Concern cannot be faked -- it is either there or not, and children can easily discern a volunteer's real motives for wanting to work with them. The youth promoter who finds that she has no real vocation for working with children, should probably request a change of assignments. Only by caring can an adult find her way to a child's heart to bring about changes.

Some essential characteristics for youth promoters which I have been able to identify are:

1) willingness to share oneself with children, emotionally as well as professionally.
2) flexibility -- able to reevaluate personal beliefs and preconceptions.
3) respect for the individuality of each child with whom she works.
4) accessibility -- available to children whenever they need her.
5) perseverance -- not easily discouraged by setbacks or failures, does not feel betrayed by children who fail to live up to her expectations.
6) not concerned with "domesticating" children; helps them cope with society on their own terms.
7) listens to what children have to say -- respects their opinions, allows them to develop their own set of goals and personal standards.
8) enjoys the company of children.
9) awareness of the causes of vagrancy in children and other maladjusted behaviors.

Working With Counterparts

The subject of working relationships with host country counterparts is much discussed in Peace Corps training. There are, however, some particulars of youth development work and counterpart relations which are unique to this program and deserving of special mention here.

Peace Corps service is about working with people. Volunteers are assigned to work in the general areas of health, rural development, formal education, or youth development. In this capacity, they may provide direct services to a specific population: mothers, farmers, entrepreneurs, or in the case of youth development -- disadvantaged children. At the same time, they are assigned to a host-country agency and are expected to work mainly through their counterparts. An Education volunteer ostensibly teaches other teachers, not the students, and Health volunteers work with other health professionals, not the infirm.

Youth Development volunteers are usually assigned to work with program directors, social workers, and vocational instructors. But the nature of the work is such that they often become directly involved in the lives of the target population -- the children of a center. There may be a tendency, then, for some volunteers to work independently of their counterparts.

For most Youth Development volunteers, the work with children is more rewarding than that with counterparts. Many youth promoters find that it is easier to work with children. They are more easily influenced, not as firmly set in their opinions, more receptive to new ideas, and more readily comply with a volunteer's wishes. Frustrated volunteers often complain that their counterparts do not support their project initiatives. But when support is lacking from counterparts, it can often be had from the children of a project. Volunteers who have a hard time gaining the acceptance of their counterparts may find that children are more cooperative and easier to motivate. They may therefore be inclined to implement their projects directly with the youths, rather than include a counterpart.

Children also seem to be more appreciative of the volunteer's presence in the center and personal attentions. They will make him feel that he is wanted and needed. these children tend to bring out the best in volunteers, many of whom are young themselves, with no prior parenting experience, yet possessing highly developed nurturing skills. Many volunteers are attracted to youth work for precisely this reason. They may believe that of all classes of human beings, these unfortunate children are the most needful and deserving of their help. The frustrated volunteer who meets with resistance from his counterparts, will therefore be tempted to work exclusively with the children of a project. Youth, after all, are the primary hope and future of the developing world. Not only does this group of children actively need his care and attention, they also stand to gain more by his efforts.

Young people assimilate new information faster than adults. They learn more rapidly and their progress is more easily measured. They may also be more tolerant of foreigners. Ethnic pride will prevent many adults from accepting help or advice from an American volunteer. But many Third World youths openly admire Americans and are willing to listen to Peace Corps volunteers with an open mind. Most children understand that the volunteer is there to help them, and have no qualms about needing this help.

All volunteers seem to agree that youth development is about working with children, not just for them. It cannot be wrong for a volunteer to devote most of his time and energy to the children of a project. These children need this attention, which Youth Development volunteers are so good at providing. But the purpose of Peace Corps service is to have a lasting impact on the administering agency, as well as the individual members of a target population. It is not possible to have such an impact by working exclusively with the youths of a center; the volunteer must also work within the larger framework of the institution -- helping to organize and improve existing services, and developing new initiatives for the program. In this respect, work relations with program personnel are even more important than relationships with children. The volunteer who works exclusively with children will no doubt influence and enhance the lives of a few individuals. But the institution will have remained essentially the same, and future residents will not benefit from the volunteer's temporary presence.

Most Youth Development volunteers strive to work simultaneously with children and staff. The typical youth promoter maintains daily personal contact with the children of a center. The time with children is often spent in an informal, loosely structured way -- playing, talking, sharing information, and experiences. But it is equally important to program structured activities which include counterparts. Additionally, volunteers may get involved in the development of one or two special projects for the overall improvement of the center -- a library, for instance, or token economy.

This seems to be the ideal approach for Peace Corps youth promoters: volunteers have regular personal contact with the youths of a center and, at the same time, work to improve or expand the services of the program. The first objective -- maintaining close personal contact with the youths of the center -- is generally pretty easy to manage. The second -- program development -- is the real purpose of Peace Corps service, and for most volunteers it involves a great deal of effort, as well as frustration.

Some volunteers are very careful to include their counterparts in every aspect of project development. Others (myself included), are not so conscientious. It is my experience, and strong belief, that volunteer-initiated projects which do not involve a host-country counterpart at all stages of development are doomed to eventual failure. A single volunteer may accomplish a great deal to temporarily improve the quality of life in a center. He may plant gardens, develop a program for behavior modification, teach vocational skills, and establish a resource center. But none of this will last unless someone stays behind to carry on his work.

Some volunteers have a hard time getting along with counterparts or accepting their way of doing things. But the fostering of good work relations with host-country staff is actually one of the most important roles of a Peace Corps volunteer. The volunteer who is not accepted by his counterparts will be severely limited in what he can accomplish. Peace Corps volunteers are mandated to work with these people, to influence their attitudes and methods of work. This will only happen if the indigenous staff are willing to accept the volunteer and give him their approval.

Host-country personnel may have several good reasons for withholding their acceptance from a Peace Corps volunteer. Under the circumstances, the unpaid volunteer is often perceived as a threat to the indigenous staff of a center, who are paid employees, dependent on their jobs. The volunteer works for free, and in many cases he does a better job, or works with more dedication, than the paid employees of the program. He may also have a higher education, more sophisticated skills, and newer approaches to child care. Because of these advantages, it may appear to some that he is out to make the other staff look bad by comparison (and often this is what actually happens). But while Peace Corps volunteers often outperform host-country counterparts, one must keep in mind that the paid employees of a center contend with many more pressures than most volunteers. For the indigenous employee, youth development work is not just a mission -- it is a livelihood. Her economic security, and that of her family, depend on her ability to remain employed in an underdeveloped economy, where many are unemployed, poor, and desperate. The well-being of herself and family will sit far higher on her list of priorities than that of the center and its children. For such a person, job stability is of primary importance, and it stands to reason that any changes which threaten to alter or disrupt the terms of her employment will likely be met with great resistance.

Many volunteers see it as their duty to change the attitudes and work habits of their counterparts. Counterparts, on the other hand, may feel that it is in their best interest to maintain the status quo, keeping job, duties, and work methods just as they have always been. There seems to be a dynamic of tension built into counterpart relationships. The only way to surmount these tensions is to develop a mutual understanding of one another's situations. It also helps to have an attitude of wanting to learn from one's counterparts -- to be changed by them if necessary -- as well as teach them.

Most problems with counterparts or agency politics are probably experienced by new volunteers. It is my belief that Peace Corps volunteers should not concern themselves with the development of new program initiatives during the first few months of service. This period of time is crucial for gaining acceptance by counterparts and supervisors. The beginning months of an assignment should be spent in trying to meet the supervisor's expectations. The initial duties of the volunteer may not be entirely to his liking; they may often seem inappropriate or beneath his abilities. But by doing what is asked of him at the beginning of service, he demonstrates that he is willing to cooperate with the agency and place its need and requirements above his own. Once he has gained the acceptance of his counterparts and supervisor, he will probably obtain the support he needs to implement his own agenda for project development.

New volunteers should make an effort to adjust to the demands and expectation of the new work environment. This requires patience and an ability to compromise. Youth promoters should exercise caution in what they do the first few months of service. But this does not mean that they should remain on the sidelines, waiting for acceptance from the rest of the staff. Acceptance only comes of hard work and a demonstrated willingness to follow directions. Most supervisors will expect a volunteer to be actively involved in the program at the start of his service. These expectations may not be clearly defined. The volunteer may be left to define many of his own duties within a project. But in any case, he should ask for guidance and feedback from his supervisor, and look for ways in which he might be of service to the program as it already is, not as he envisions it to be. In time, as he proves himself to be a person of ability, he will be able to pursue some of his own initiatives.

Here are some useful tips for improving relationships with counterparts and gaining their acceptance:

1) conform to the same standards of work as other employees; do not excuse yourself from unpleasant responsibilities, duties, or work requirements on the basis of being a 'volunteer'; conform to the same schedules as salaried employees (including U.S. holidays).
2) maintain a professional demeanor -- dress and act appropriately.
3) think of yourself as a role model for staff as well as children.
4) do what is requested of you at the beginning of service; accept undesirable assignments in order to gain acceptance and credibility.
5) promote good relations between children and staff; support your co-workers in conflicts with youths; never make them look bad in front of children.
6) understand that your counterparts have to work for a living; their level of personal commitment or dedication may not be equal to your own.
7) involve counterparts in your work with children.
8) look for ways of supporting counterparts in their work, as well as your own.
9) find out what your supervisor wants and expects from you; let her decide how you can be of greatest service to the program.
10) be sensitive to the limitations and pressures on

your counterparts; try to understand their reasons for working the way they do.

11) design and implement projects with counterparts in mind; do not make them so sophisticated or complicated that no one else can replicate them.

CHAPTER TWO:
CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

Childhood Behavior: Practice and Theory

My final assignment as a Youth Development volunteer in Honduras was to visit the other Peace Corps supported youth projects in the country. In part, I was conducting a survey on program services and the various roles of Peace Corps youth promoters. Youth Development was a relatively new program in Honduras, and my main objective was to determine what exactly the Peace Corps was doing in this area. A major part of this assignment was to meet with all the other youth promoters -- to obtain information about their projects, support their work, and discuss some issues of concern to us all. In so doing, I gained a very clear sense of the many problems and frustrations encountered by volunteers in Youth Development. Foremost of these were concerns about the behavior of children, methods of discipline, and ways of helping children in crisis.

Almost all of the volunteers I surveyed cited problems with children's behavior and the use of questionable disciplinary methods as major causes of personal frustration in their projects. All of us experienced significant difficulties in these two areas of our work. At one time or another, we ran into bitter conflict with other program staff over the methods of discipline used in a project. Many of us also experienced deep frustration and personal hurt from the aggressive, often hostile, behavior of children we were trying to help.

When visiting with other volunteers in their projects, I was often asked how best to handle some of the many behavioral problems which commonly occurred in their centers. As the longest-serving youth development volunteer in Honduras, I already had a good deal of experience working with these children. I had developed an intuitive sense of why they behaved as they did. My reactions to their negative behaviors were also intuitive, and often ineffective. Although I would respond to the questions of other volunteers with the authority of experience, the truth is that I really didn't know the best way of handling many common behavioral problems. Like many other professionals in this field, there was a lot I didn't understand about childhood behavior. There was even less I knew about helping children change behaviors. But I did what I could in the reluctant role of counselor, disciplinarian and agent of personal change, guided principally by common sense and intuition (my emotions, too, more than I like to admit). Ours was not a very professional approach. But this was all we had to work with (my counterparts and I). Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I can see that I made many mistakes while working with these children.

Since completion of my Peace Corps service in 1987, I have taken a job in the field of mental health. My subsequent experiences in this field have taught me a little more about the methods for helping people change their behavior. My current graduate studies in social work have also afforded a theoretical foundation to my practice methods. Now, after a total of nine years in social services, I am only beginning to appreciate the full importance of having a practice theory.

Most of the Peace Corps volunteers I have known are action-oriented people. They are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of other people, and they seem to understand that the expounding of theories about underdevelopment is of very slight consequence to the poor of the world. Most of them have tried to help people in a practical way -- to realistically improve the conditions of their lives. At times, it may seem that a preoccupation with theoretical concerns would actually detract from the urgency of this work.

On the other hand, to be a truly effective youth worker, one must have an empirical understanding of human personality and the various factors affecting behavior. Many volunteers in youth development are involved in changing destructive behaviors in children and adolescents. They may also be concerned with improving the methods of discipline that are used in a project. In order to accomplish these objectives, the volunteer must have a general understanding of the principal factors which motivate behavior, how people change, and common methods for helping troubled children.

Many volunteers I spoke with in Honduras encountered much frustration with children who seemed to purposefully misbehave, as if to provoke a reaction from adults. Such behavior is often interpreted as a challenge to adult authority. Actually, there are other, very specific reasons why children act this way. Theories of personality development inform us that punishment seeking behavior is often a response to uncertainty. Uncertainty provokes anxiety; the motive to resolve uncertainty is one of the principal factors affecting behavior. The child who misbehaves, and is not caught or punished, experiences uncertainty. Her belief in the inviolability of rules is shaken; her faith in parental/adult omnipotence is shaken; she feels anxious about being discovered; she begins to question the viability of her 'good self'. The longer her misdeeds go unpunished, the more anxiety she is bound to feel. At some point she will purposefully begin to seek punishment, just to resolve this uncertainty.

Understanding of these processes enable workers to deal with punishment seeking behavior at its source. We can now see that such misconduct is not necessarily directed against the authority of persons in charge of a program. Rather, it is a coping mechanism which helps the child deal with anxiety. Having this knowledge, program staff will be careful to avoid situations which provoke such uncertainty. The practical applications are substantial. This type of behavior can be largely avoided by clarifying rules and ensuring that they are consistently enforced.

A theoretical foundation in the sciences of behavior and psychology can help youth workers to respond to children's needs and help them change maladaptive behaviors. Practical techniques of behavior modification, positive reinforcement, and counseling are often employed in youth services. Youth program personnel need to know how these techniques may be used within a center. But it is equally important to know why they are effective. The following section deals with the most basic elements of child development and behavioral theory.

Stages of Development

To understand human behavior, it is necessary to consider the actions of individuals in relation to their total environment. This is the so-called 'ecological approach', which accounts for the influence of individual biology and cognition, as well as social, economic and cultural factors. In the past, behavioral scientists held to a particular perspective or body of theory (environmental, analytical, learning, etc.). Today, there is a greater integration of these theories. Many theorists now believe that many different factors -- all of them inseparable and none of which is primary -- together influence individual behavior. Human behavior and personality are explicable only in terms of the whole individual, as he relates to his total environment. **Figure 1** shows how these various factors act on a person to influence his behavior and concept of self.

This diagram illustrates the concept of **reciprocal determinism**. The theory holds that individual personality is a composite of experience, behavior, biology, and beliefs -- forces which are in constant interaction with one another. A teenage boy has a drinking problem (behavior). He may have begun to drink because of pressure from his peer group (experience, or 'environment'). He also believes that drinking is a culturally approved rite of masculinity (beliefs). This belief was acquired from his father, and society in general (experience). But he eventually becomes alcoholic, because he has a genetic predisposition to alcoholism (biology). He also drinks because alcohol provides relief from anxiety and pressures of life (experience and biology). Drinking affects his mood (biology), and causes him to act erratically (behavior). This behavior causes conflicts in school and at home (experience), which in turn produce more anxiety. His health may also be

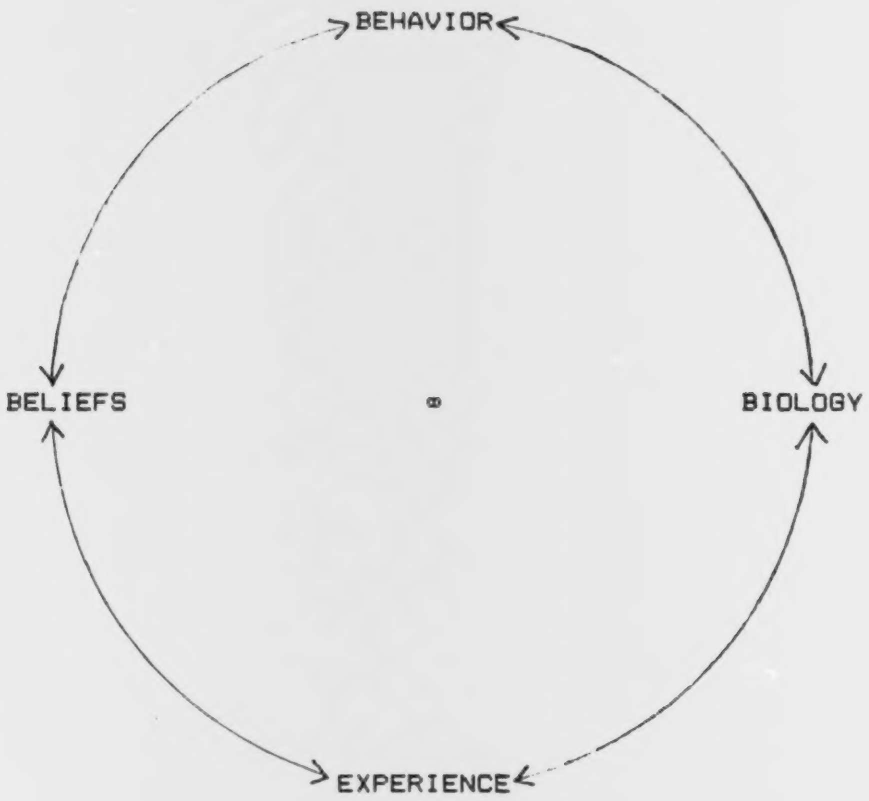


Figure 1. Reciprocal determinism

affected (biology). Life becomes unmanageable and he drinks even more. He rationalizes his drinking by telling himself he doesn't have a problem -- the problem is with his parents, school and everyone else who is telling him how to run his life (beliefs).

When dealing with problems of personality and behavior, it is necessary to address all the various factors which contribute to a situation. In order to help an alcoholic youth, the adult worker must approach the problem in its totàlity, dealing with all these separate factors as one entire process. It is not enough to say that he musn't drink: the youth worker will have to help him find other ways of coping with stress, change his belief system, remove him from the influencing environment, and treat his physiological addiction. Only in this way, do problems of such magnitude ever get resolved.

Experience, biology, behaviors and beliefs are the main components of personality. These categories comprise a multitude of influences. The most significant of these are: temperament; intellectual functioning; cognitive development; ego strengths; health; family interaction; security of attachment to parents; learned behaviors; socioeconomic status; cultural and religious beliefs; personal standards; social values; emotions; gender identity; and personal experience. Youth workers need to be aware of all these factors when trying to help solve a problem or change a behavior.

Most Peace Corps volunteers are aware of the many environmental factors which contribute to delinquency and homelessness in Third World youths. Environmental and learning theories of recent decades claim that personality is largely determined by conditioning and experience. But as behavioral scientists begin to understand more about the workings of the brain, there is increasing support for theories of cognition and biological constitution. These theories have not yet gained the popular acceptance which environmental explanations now enjoy. But it now seems clear that cognition and biology influence behavior just as strongly as conditioning and experience.

Volunteers who work closely with youths will recognize that there are some standard behaviors which are typical of adolescence. The stereotypical view of adolescence holds that teenagers are rebellious and contrary; that they are simultaneously torn between social acceptance and nonconformity; that they are painfully insecure and still not entirely stable in the formation of a personal identity.

The Freudians contend that teenage rebelliousness is a continuation of the Oedipal conflict. Psycho-social theorists conceive of this stage of development in terms of an identity crisis, and the learning theorists believe these behaviors are learned by mixed messages from parents and society. It is probably true that all these explanations are partially valid. But it is also useful to look at the cognitive and biological processes which influence behavior during this stage.

Jean Piaget was one of the first theorists to study cognitive development in children. He posited four distinct stages of development in thought, the final of which is 'formal operations', beginning in adolescence. With the onset of formal operations, the adolescent is able to process hypothetical information. She will suddenly be able to solve problems which require the use of deductive reasoning: All two-headed cows are purple; the cow in my backyard has two heads.... Guess what color it is? Pre-operational children will not be able to solve this riddle. They will typically respond that there is no such thing as a two-headed cow. But the adolescent understands that this is a hypothetical situation, and uses logic to solve the problem.

This kind of formal reasoning also enables the adolescent to examine her beliefs and those of her society, and to explore the inconsistencies between the two. She may begin to pose riddles of a different kind: They tell me in church that God created the world and that he loves everybody; it seems like there are a lot of unhappy people in the world... If God loves everybody, how come there is so much unhappiness? This same type of reasoning will lead her to question the omnipotence of her parents, wisdom of adults, and justice of social systems. Suddenly, the adolescent begins to doubt everything she has been taught. She will even doubt her personal beliefs, self-worth, and individual identity. This kind of doubting accounts for much of the rebellion, awkwardness and role confusion typically associated with adolescence.

Another 'skill' of formal operations is the ability to exhaust all the possible solutions to a problem. This ability is largely responsible for the sudden rise in suicide rates during the stage of adolescence. Adolescents will attempt to use logic to resolve a personal problem. But logic will not heal a shattered family, or help a lonely teenager gain the acceptance of his peers. When logic fails and faith is shaken, the troubled adolescent may believe that there is no possible solution to his situation. This kind of despair can lead to suicide and other self-destructive behaviors.

In order to fully understand the behaviors and crises of adolescence, it is necessary to consider all of the forces which act on the individual personality. New thought processes create uncertainty in the minds of adolescents; biological changes attendant to puberty produce anxiety; peer pressure is an impetus to acting out behaviors; experimentation with new beliefs, abilities and identities is cause for significant role confusion. Human personality development may be easier to understand as a simple, continuous process.

Though personal growth does not occur in clearly defined, consecutive steps, it is convenient to think of the human life-cycle in terms of developmental stages. Each of these stages has its own set of cognitive advances, physical changes, and psycho-social tasks for growth. The stages for ages three to eighteen are outlined below, to assist volunteers working with these age groups.

Pre-School Years - Three Through Five

Physical Development:
High activity level; rapid muscular growth.

Cognitive Development:
Piaget's preoperational stage -- development of elementary reasoning powers; intuitive, magical thinking. The preoperational child believes only what he sees. Every object he encounters is alive and endowed with a purpose. A pencil is alive because it writes; a pen

which is out of ink is dead. The child believes that the world revolves around himself -- everyone thinks the same as he does, everyone shares his feelings. Because of this, he believes that any bad thing that happens to him is a punishment for something he has done, even if he is not at fault. He also believes that punishments always fit the crime; the more severe a punishment, the more he will feel that he is bad.

Language:
Vocabulary of about 2,000 words; asks a lot of questions.

Affective Development:
Strong attachment to family; makes efforts to control his temper; plagued by imaginary fears -- things in the closet and under the bed.

Psycho-Social Development:
Erikson's stage of Initiative versus Guilt -- continued development of the superego, with conflict resulting from discrepancies between the child's beliefs about standards and his performance according to those standards. During this period, the child may feel guilt about his fantasies and actions; these feelings are often relieved by his high level of activity and initiative during this stage. Mahler's stage of object constancy -- bonding with mother and significant others is completed. There is no longer splitting between the images of 'good mother' and 'bad mother', 'good self' and 'bad self'; the child comes to understand that satisfaction and frustration occur together in the same relationship. Sex roles and gender identity are firmly established. This happens through a process of identification with the same-sex parent.

Early School Years - Six Through Eleven

Physical Development:
Motor activity is more complex and coordinated; high level of energy -- a time for trying out new skills and abilities. With the onset of prepubescence, physical differences between the sexes are apparent; wide variation in physical development between the sexes.

Language:
Enjoys playing word games, delights in puns.

Cognitive Development:
Piaget's operational stage -- magical thinking is replaced by the beginnings of logical reasoning. The child is able to account for motives in the actions of

others. Because of this, he is able to distinguish between bad events which occur by accident, and punishments which result from misdeeds: the child has a morality. He also believes very strongly in justice and fair play. He tends to see things in very concrete terms; he can deal with facts, but not ideas. Because of this, his concept of justice is black and white. A person is either right or wrong; there are no in-betweens. He is not yet able to think abstractly. At this stage, many of the child's beliefs are based on his parents teachings.

Affective Development:

Temper tantrums and mood extremes prevalent at the beginning of this stage. Basic emotions are established; has a definite set of likes and dislikes. Sensitivity to others increasing; has stronger, longer-lasting friendships. The child also worries about school, popularity, problems at home. Strongly seeks approval of others; conforms in order to avoid disapproval.

Psycho-Social Development:

Erikson's stage of Industry versus Inferiority -- primarily a social stage; the child either begins to develop an identity of potential usefulness and productivity, or succumbs to feelings of inferiority. His future role as a worker, parent, and provider is partially rooted in this stage. The child enters school; must relate to new peers and adult authority figures. He is also confronted with structured learning tasks.

Early Adolescence - Twelfth Through Fifteenth Year

Physical Development:

Maximum growth period, followed by abrupt deceleration. Filling-out of body and development of primary sex organs. First menstruation in girls between the ages of twelve and thirteen. Some awkwardness, due to uneven development of feet, arms, hands, etc. Facial acne a cause for great concern in many children at this age.

Cognitive Development:

Piaget's formal operations stage -- development of abstract thought and the ability to hypothesize; beginnings of interest with abstract social ideas, such as religion and utopias. The adolescent is sensitive to inconsistencies; will question the wisdom and justice of adult authorities.

Affective Development:

Emotional swings are common, due to concerns about appearance, popularity and personal identity and abilities. Some idealization of heroes and role models; deepening of affection in peer relationships.

Psycho-Social Development:

Erikson's stage of Identity versus Role Confusion -- the stage of identity crisis; the adolescent struggles to maintain a balance between his inner sense of self and the self he represents to the rest of the world. Successful management of this crisis results from the recognition of his accomplishments; an important stage for the establishment of a secure identity and self-esteem. Peers have a powerful influence on immediate events and behaviors; parents continue to have an influence on long-term goals and values. The adolescent is less egocentric, more principled. Beginning of sexual experimentation.

Middle Adolescence - Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Year

Physical Development:

Little growth in height and weight, but continued muscular development. Maturation of sex organs and secondary sexual characteristics.

Cognitive Development:

The adolescent is at peak organic intellectual potential; at this point, experiential intelligence begins to increase.

Affective Development:

Anger and affection are prominent emotions. The adolescent begins to form intimate relationships with others; issues of independence often provoke reactions of anger.

Psycho-Social Development:

About to enter Erikson's stage of Intimacy versus Isolation. Social Roles have a significant impact on self-image.

This outline covers the ages most commonly encountered in Youth Development projects. But personality development obviously does not end at age eighteen. It is a life-long process. Though many life-patterns are established by the end of adolescence, it is still possible for individuals to change, even in their final years. This is what gives the youth worker hope to be able to help children change their maladaptive behaviors.

Many of the children in group care have suffered severe deprivation in early life. We are probably all aware of the importance of mother-child bonding during infancy. Numerous research experiments, with animals and human infants, show that babies who are deprived of physical contact and affection, or motherly care, tend to be sickly, fearful, and emotionally troubled. The socialization process begins with the child's first relationship, generally with the mother. Where security of attachment is lacking in this first relationship, the prospects for a happy adjustment are greatly diminished. On the other hand, follow-up studies to these experiments show that many species recover from the effects of deprivation in later life. A poor start in life does not necessarily lead to a dysfunctional adulthood. Social services programs for troubled youths exist because there is still hope that children may recover from the effects of early deprivation.

Some behaviors in children are common to particular age groups. Others are contingent upon individual traits of a child. Obviously, the hyperactive child will behave differently from others. We make allowances for his behavior because we understand that it results from a nervous condition. Not as obvious, are the many other temperamental differences affecting behavior.

Temperamental qualities such as irritability, inhibition, and adaptability vary a great deal from child to child. We often conceive of these traits in terms of "character". But, actually, they are just as much a part of a child's biological constitution as a learning disability or hyperactivity. Developmental psychologists now conceive of temperamental traits in terms of genetics, as much as personality. Inhibition, or "shyness" -- once considered a psychological 'type' -- is now thought to result from a particular sensitivity of the limbic system.

This may seem a trivial distinction. But the fact is, our understanding of a problem largely determines our response to it. Unfortunately, we tend to give more legitimacy to a problem with environmental or genetic origins, than those we believe to result from 'character'. Such distinctions usually involve beliefs about accountability: who is responsible -- nature and society, or the individual? When we attribute a problem to character, in effect, we blame the individual. There is usually less sympathy for the highly reactive child, whose irritability interferes with socialization, than the misbehaving child who is obviously hyperactive. But if both conditions are based in biological constitution, why should we treat them any differently?

According to researchers, Thomas and Chase, there are nine characteristics of temperament. They are:

1) level of activity: slow to hyperactive.

2) regularity of biological functions: regular and predictable to irregular and unpredictable.

3) approach or withdrawal: shy to bold.

4) adaptability: easily accepts change to accepts change with difficulty.

5) intensity of reaction: mild to intense.

6) threshold of responsiveness: level of physiological stimulation necessary to provoke a response -- from a light touch to heavy contact.

7) quality of mood: amount of pleasant feelings versus amount of unpleasant feelings.

8) distractability: easy to difficult.

9) attention span and persistence: response to interruption -- stays with a specified behavior or wanders to others (different from distractability).

Finally, it is necessary to speak about the motives of behavior in children and adolescents. The most common motives in human behavior are:

1) the motive to survive: this includes comfort-seeking motives, such as housing, clothing, diet, etc.

2) the motive to resolve uncertainty: uncertainty poses a threat to an individual's sense of self, by challenging his personal truths and system of beliefs, and causing him to doubt his powers of mastery. Sources of uncertainty are the unfamiliar, the inconsistent, and the unpredictable. Most people deal with uncertainty by losing themselves in some activity or by taking action to eliminate its source.

3) the motive for mastery: this motive is prominent whenever there is an observed discrepancy between a person's actual accomplishments and the level of accomplishment he aspires to achieve ('ego ideal'). There are three kinds of mastery motives: the desire to match a behavior to a standard; the desire to know the future and gain control over uncertain outcomes; the desire for self-definition.

4) the motive of hostility: anger results from the belief that one is threatened or frustrated by some force, outside of the self (guilt is often

anger turned inwards). Hostility is the motive to remove or hurt the anger-provoking object. Hostility and anger most commonly occur when a person is prevented from behaving in a manner consistent with his ego ideal, or personal desires and beliefs. They are the blocking of a response sequence -- the interruption of a desired outcome. Anxiety and fear occur when the cause for this interruption cannot be specified.

5) the motive of sexual gratification: the primary goal of this motive is sensual pleasure.

Individual behavior is often guided by these motives. Human beings will go to great lengths to alleviate uncertainty, unblock a response, demonstrate their mastery, or satisfy their biological and sexual needs. When these goals are consistently blocked or frustrated, individual behaviors become dysfunctional. Helping children with behavioral problems -- especially children who are "acting out" -- is largely a matter of helping them come to terms with these motives and removing the sources of frustration.

Volunteer Roles In Discipline of Children

Youth Development volunteers are often involved in conflict over the methods of discipline used in a project. Caring volunteers are angered at the sight of a child being physically mistreated or unjustly punished. On the other hand, many of these children are difficult to manage. They tend to act out, and at times are abusive to program staff. Effective management of negative behaviors -- a major problem in most centers -- is difficult to achieve. Volunteers rank this aspect of youth development as very high on their list of job-related frustrations.

For most adults, discipline is a matter of personal style and expectations. The best methods are those that work for both the child and the project. Many volunteers favor positive reinforcement and education. But punitive measures are equally valid tools of behavior modification. Regarding the use of such measures, project caretakers should try to follow their best inclinations. At the same time, they must conform to the expectations of the institution. Most of all, they should hold the welfare of the child -- or group of children -- above all other considerations.

In matters of discipline, Peace Corps volunteers should always work in conjunction with other program staff. Methods of behavior modification and discipline tend to be more effective when they are instituted by host-country personnel. Child-rearing practices around the world are heavily bound by culture and tradition. Some disciplinary measures which are commonly used may seem inhuman by American standards; and the volunteer is right to attempt to prevent the occurrence of child abuse. But direct intervention on behalf of the punished child is not always the wisest course of action. Where differences exist over the use of disciplinary tactics, it is generally more productive to take a conciliatory approach, rather than a confrontational one.

Volunteers may work with agency counterparts to change their attitudes and methods of disciplining children. But they should be careful not to alienate those workers who have the difficult job of disciplining misbehaved children. It is easy for outsiders to criticize the disciplinarians of a project, establishing themselves as the champions of children's rights. But for the most part, it is the live-in staff of a program who must contend with the undesirable consequences of children's destructive behaviors. Volunteers, who usually live away from a project, cannot fully appreciate the enormous amount of stress which may impel live-in personnel to overreact to behavioral problems. Many of the children living in-residence are maladjusted or emotionally troubled. Fighting, stealing, lying and destructiveness are common behaviors in any residential program. Live-in personnel have to deal with these behaviors on a continual basis. They are regularly subjected to a number of stressors, affecting their judgement and job performance -- stresses such as lack of privacy; inadequate sleep and time for rest; the monotony of an institutional diet and living conditions; restriction of personal freedom; lack of adult entertainment and normal sex life; and most of all, the testing behaviors, aggression, and challenges to authority. The use of corporal punishment in the institutional setting is not just a function of ignorance and culture. Having lived in one such institution for three years, I can understand how the most progressive adult would occasionally want to strike a child or overreact to misbehaviors.

Culture and tradition also influence the methods of discipline used in a program. The use of corporal punishment to correct unwanted behavior is fairly common throughout the world. In many areas, corporal punishment is a standard disciplinary practice. Youth workers who do not have a high level of education will rely on their own experiences to guide them in these matters. In many cases, this means hitting children when they misbehave.

Many of the children who live in institutions, also have an expectation to be physically punished when they misbehave. Corporal punishment has been a standard part of their cultural and familial upbringing. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the frustration of expectations causes uncertainty; and uncertainty is one of the principal causes of anxiety. Some children will actually seek harsh punishments, in order to alleviate this uncertainty and absolve them of their feelings of guilt.

The use of corporal punishment in the institutional setting is highly undesirable (for various reasons, which will be discussed later in this chapter). Peace Corps volunteers are right to be concerned about its occurrence. But indignation (a natural response), will not help the situation. Volunteers should attempt to change attitudes -- both of children and of staff -- before they can change these practices. This means educating people about the harmful effects of physical punishments and presenting them with viable alternatives. It also requires that the volunteer be sensitive to the various factors which contribute to this problem. A volunteer should never take sides between children and staff. Her role in the program should be one of mediation, if anything -- to promote harmony and the personal well-being of everyone who lives and works there.

Some volunteers may feel tempted to get directly involved in the discipline of children. This is especially true of volunteers who live in a project. But apart from the legal risks to the volunteer, this is probably not an appropriate role for Peace Corps workers. Child-rearing practices tend to be culture-sensitive and in this respect, foreign volunteers may be resented for their interference. The disciplining of children should be left to those who are specifically charged with this responsibility. This should be a person who lives in the project and fully understands the cultural norms for raising children.

Maladjusted Behavior In Children

When we speak of 'maladjusted' behavior, we refer to a habitual pattern of behaviors which are detrimental to the individual. Maladjusted behavior: 1) is frequent or habitual; 2) is ultimately harmful to the individual, environment, or other persons, and 3) impedes adaptation and healthy development. Individual behaviors are maladaptive only if they occur as part of a consistent pattern. All children break the rules from time to time. The maladjusted child does so consistently, much to his detriment.

It is a common characteristic of maladjusted children, that disciplinary actions are usually not effective at curtailing their negative behaviors. They continue to misbehave in spite of -- perhaps because of -- the threat of punishment. It seems they are unable, or unwilling, to consider the consequences of their behavior. For this reason, they require extra attention, either in the form of counseling or behavior modification.

For many people, maladjusted behavior means excessive aggression or destructiveness. But it may also include unnatural fears, excessive inhibition, and academic underachievement. Any behavior which impedes growth or is consistently detrimental, may be called 'maladjusted'. Some theorists include bad personal habits (excessive nail-biting), and problems with continency (bed-wetting), in this category of behaviors; but these are different kinds of maladjustment.

'Acting out' behaviors are fairly common in youth centers. This is behavior, usually destructive, which is directed against other persons or objects. This kind of behavior is a coping mechanism, which allows the individual to avoid pain and internal conflict by externalizing unpleasant feelings. Acting out behaviors typically occur when aggression and other unacceptable urges cannot be contained. The unpleasant feelings are then discharged through such behaviors as vandalism, addiction, stealing, and acts of physical aggression.

Before we label a behavior maladjusted, we must consider it in context of where and why it is performed. The relative 'adjustability' of a behavior is contingent on several factors, including cultural norms, societal standards, and moral values. A 13 year-old boy who carries firearms and kills with almost religious fervor would be labelled maladjusted by most Americans... unless he is a soldier in the Iranian army. Foreign volunteers must give careful consideration to such cultural relativities. Is aggressive behavior maladjusted for the boy who is raised in a culture of **machismo**? What if the behavior is well adapted to that culture, though the behavior itself is detrimental? Perhaps the society is maladjusted. These are difficult issues. The youth worker should base her approach on what is overall best for the individual.

A concept of maladjustment also requires that negative behaviors be defined. Fighting, stealing, and substance abuse cannot be tolerated in any program. This almost goes without saying. But there are many other unacceptable behaviors which are differently defined in different programs. These include rules about school attendance, participation in program activities, personal hygiene and daily chores. These requirements need to be explained in certain terms, so that children will know when they are in violation of the rules. Maladjusted children may have trouble conforming to these expectations, because they have a behavioral problem. But normal children, too, will not comply, unless they have a clear understanding of the rules.

Rules exist in any institution, in order to ensure its smooth operation, and to promote the healthy development of individuals. They are made with the understanding that they will be broken. Rules are established precisely because negative behaviors may be expected of youths who have lived in the street and been abandoned by their families. Infractions of the rules should therefore be treated as part of a learning process.

In the interests of diminishing uncertainty and anxiety in children, the rules should be very explicit. They should also be logically consistent. But while rules are always constant, responses are not. In dealing with negative behaviors, the staff of a program must consider the causes and circumstances of that behavior, and the individual character of the child. Most children respond well to a simple punishment or castigation. But maladjusted, learning disabled, and temperamental children need a more comprehensive approach to treatment. Rules are rigid; responses must be flexible.

Methods of Discipline for Youth Centers

When we speak of discipline for children, we usually think of punishment. But the term **discipline** really has a broader meaning. It is actually a part of socialization -- the process by which individuals internalize the norms of a society and culture. Punishment may reinforce socialization; but so do positive responses.

Ideally, discipline should primarily exist in the structure of a program, not in its methods for meting out punishment. The daily routines of a center -- school attendance requirements, daily chores, and expectations to conform to the rules -- are components of discipline. It is hoped that these standards will eventually be internalized by the individual. When they are not, a punishment (or other form of negative reinforcement), may be required.

Punishment may be defined as the act of applying an aversive stimulus, or withdrawing a reinforcing stimulus, in response to an undesirable behavior. There are three basic forms of punishment: 1) **aversive**, such as a spanking, or other unpleasant experience; 2) **response cost**, the withholding of a privilege or desirable activity; and 3) **time out**, temporary removal of the individual from all sources of reinforcement, positive and negative.

Effective punishment is consistent (administered every time the undesirable behavior occurs), and immediate. Ideally, the punishment should be administered as soon as the behavior begins to occur -- before it has a chance to run its full course. It is even better to check the behavior before it occurs, so a punishment will not be necessary.

For older children, punishment should be accompanied by a discussion about the behavior and its causes. Youths should be encouraged to examine the motives of behavior, together with a staff person. It may be possible to remove the causes of a problem, correcting the undesirable behavior without the use of a punishment. Workers should also help older children to gain insight into their behavior. This may not be possible with young children, because they do not yet have a concept of morality and retribution (see sections on preoperational and operational behavior, at the beginning of this chapter). Adolescents will understand that bad actions elicit bad responses, such as a punishment. So it is possible for them to reflect on the morality of their behavior.

Small children believe that an action is bad only because it is followed by a punishment (this is why it is important to punish similar behaviors in a consistent way; because the young child will feel that the same behavior is bad when it is punished, but acceptable when it is not, and this inconsistency creates uncertainty in the mind of the child). Undesirable behaviors which go unpunished are not considered wrong. By this same reasoning, any bad occurrence -- an illness or death of a parent -- is thought to be a punishment for wrong behavior. This kind of logic in young children makes it very hard to reason with them about the cause and effect of their behavior.

Punishment primarily serves a corrective function. It principal purpose is to stop or suppress undesirable behavior (during the operational stage, ages seven through eleven, children believe that its primary purpose is retributive). Children develop a personal morality by internalizing the commands of parents or other significant caretakers. After the age of two, the child is capable of feeling guilt whenever she violates those commands. These commands, or 'conscience', often conflict with the child's wishes and fantasies. Guilt is a product of this conflict (in older persons, it may also be a cover for anger -- anger turned inwards, against the self).

Children struggle a great deal to resolve this conflict between their desires and the commands of their conscience. For moral development to proceed, they need reinforcement from the environment: an unambiguous message that they should follow the dictates of conscience. Punishment often provides such reinforcement, relieving guilt, which causes anxiety.

While it may relieve guilt to some extent, punishment may also cause other bad feelings; and bad feelings are a principal cause of negative behavior. Positive reinforcement is therefore a necessary compliment to punishment. It is not enough to tell a child that she may not perform a certain behavior; she must also be presented with options for alternative behaviors that will be accepted. Caretakers must explicate the kinds of behaviors they would like to see, and reward them with positive reinforcement.

Finally, discipline in a center should be community oriented. The rules of a program should exist for the good of the individual, not the institution. However, the institution comprises many individuals, sharing both time and living space. Discipline, after all, is an important part of socialization; and socialization is about learning how to live together -- as individuals, and as a community. Rules should therefore promote a sense of community, without constricting personal growth and individuality.

The following guidelines pertain to the proper use of punishment:

1) use punishment as a method of correcting undesirable behavior, not as retribution.
2) do not overrely on punishment; use it with other methods of reinforcement.
3) explain the reasons for a punishment; clearly specify the undesirable behavior and its alternative.
4) provide the child with acceptable alternatives to the undesirable behavior.
5) While punishing an undesirable behavior, reinforce the alternative behavior.
6) punish the behavior as soon as it appears.
7) be consistent in the application of punishments for the same behavior.
8) help the child gain insight into the reasons for her negative behavior.
9) eliminate or remove the causes of the undesirable behavior, if possible; if not, help her to cope with these forces.
10) make allowances for individual traits, abilities and limitations, affecting behavior.
11) avoid assigning punishments in moments of intense anger.

Types of Punishments

Corporal Punishment: Corporal punishment (spanking, hitting, and other kinds of physical punishment), is a common form of negative reinforcement, around the world. It may be especially effective with younger children. As far as we know, an occasional spanking or slap on the wrist are not psychologically harmful to the child. Sometimes, this is the only way to show disapproval of a negative behavior. But the use of corporal punishment in youth centers is inappropriate and likely to be counterproductive.

Most of the children in a center are too old to benefit from the milder forms of corporal punishment. Spankings are humiliating to adolescents; any severer form of punishment, such as beating a child with a belt, verges on physical abuse. Corporal punishment of pre-teens and adolescents is more likely to produce feelings of resentment and anger than remorse. An adolescent who is regularly beaten for his misdeeds, will probably become even more unmanageable. When corporal punishment occurs on an institutional scale, the response is likely to be widespread rebellion.

Corporal punishment is also inappropriate because of the backgrounds and family histories of these children. Many of them live in institutions precisely because they were beaten and abused by members of their families. Many of them have been physically traumatized, and any form of bodily punishment is liable to remind them of past abuses. Corporal punishment may also be viewed as a form of violence. By using it, adults may actually role model aggressive behavior, occasionally provoking the very behaviors they intend to suppress.

Another argument against corporal punishment is the manner in which it is usually applied. In many centers, house-mothers and other domestic personnel are the ones responsible for disciplining children. Generally, these people have little formal training in the methods of professional child-care. They also live in stressful conditions. When children misbehave, these employees tend to react with traditional, often severe, methods of discipline. I have also observed that there is a tendency to look down on the children of these centers, because of their backgrounds. Less conscientious workers may believe that since these children are not under a parent's protection, they are suitable targets for violence and aggression. Such children are easily converted into victims. Any program which condones the use of corporal punishment, runs the risk of institutionalizing child abuse.

Verbal Responses: Verbal responses (reprimands, scoldings, lectures, etc.), constitute an effective reinforcement against many minor forms of negative behavior. Sometimes, a child need only know that the caretaker is angry or disappointed, for him to change his behavior. A stern lecture, and even shouting, are appropriate ways of demonstrating the unacceptability of certain behaviors.

Youth workers should be careful of how they use verbal responses -- especially when they raise their voice. Caretakers may feel angry or hurt by a child's behavior. Where a caring relationship exists between the child and worker, it is appropriate to express that anger. But it is not productive to lose one's temper. Verbal abuse can be just as damaging as physical abuse. The purpose of a verbal response is not to make the child feel bad about himself, but rather to show him that the negative behaviors are not acceptable. Caretakers should resist the temptation to shame a child who has misbehaved; the verbal reprimand should never contain ridicule, insults or humiliation. This is especially true for adolescents, who are sensitive to criticism and resent being told how to act.

Time-Out: Time-outs are used to remove a child from a situation or activity which is reinforcing a negative behavior. The purpose of this procedure is not to punish a child, so much as to isolate him from all reinforcing stimuli. When an undesirable behavior is observed, the individual is immediately removed to an empty room or 'quiet area'. He must sit quietly in this space for a period of time, usually no longer than fifteen minutes.

The time-out area should be free of distractions and reinforcing stimuli. Ideally, it is an empty room, containing but a single chair. Time-out is not a punishment; the time-out area should not in any way resemble a cell. Nor should children ever be confined in closets, or other cramped spaces. Such confinement provokes deep anxiety in many children.

In an institutional setting, the infirmary can doubly serve as the time-out room. Here, the child can reflect on his behavior in a quiet but safe environment.

Time-outs are most appropriate for acts of aggression, destructive behaviors, and acting out.

Cost Response: Cost response is the withholding of privileges or desirable activities in response to a negative behavior. It is often preferable to aversive type punishments (spankings, etc.), because it does not involve the application of a negative stimulus. In this respect, it is less authoritarian and less aggressive than aversive responses.

Witholding of allowances, non-participation in social activities, denial of family visiting privileges, are all appropriate responses to negative behavior. These forms of punishment cost the child a desired activity, without actually hurting him. But a problem with this method of reinforcement is that in order to withhold a privilege, the privilege must exist in the first place. Centers which do not give allowances, organize social events, or allow children to visit with their families, have little leverage to apply this form of punishment.

Like all forms of negative reinforcement, this one, too, is subject to abuses. Program disciplinarians must recognize that clothing, food, and shelter are not privileges. They are basic human needs, and should never be withheld from children, no matter how badly they behave. Many of these children have been institutionalized due to their parents' inability to satisfy these basic needs. In this light, withholding food from a misbehaved child is not only inappropriate -- it is cruel and insensitive.

Obligatory Task Performance: This form of punishment is typically employed by institutions (military boot camps, classrooms, and training schools for delinquent youths). As a kind of penance for their negative behaviors youths are assigned to extra work details, or are required to perform a reflective task, such as repenting one's behavior in a written essay. This form of punishment is sometimes appropriate when a child feels inordinately guilty about his behavior. The obligatory performance of an unpleasant task will help him work off some of these feelings and regain his good opinion of himself. Many conscientious children can only feel good about themselves after they have 'paid for' their bad behavior.

Punishments of this type should not be excessive. Many centers employ forced calisthenics as a form of behavioral response. The danger of this is that such methods easily turn into corporal punishment. Forced exercise and heavy labor can be just as cruel and painful as a beating.

Expulsion from the Center: At times, a child's behavior will be so detrimental to himself and others, that he can no longer be helped by the center. In such instances, it is necessary to attempt to place him in an alternative living situation: hopefully one where he can receive the help he needs. This is an extreme measure, and it should never used as a punishment. Rather, it should be reserved is the final recourse for children too difficult to treat in a non-restrictive setting. The placement of "problem" children in more restrictive settings is usually a matter of denying the problem, rather than seeking real solutions. Youth centers may rationalize the expulsion of a difficult child by claiming that he will receive more help in another institution -- usually a detention home. Such rationales are really a disavowal of the program's responsibility to the child. In the end, these children wind up living in the street again -- because they are rejected by other institutions, or run away from the restrictive environement.

Fundamentals of Behavior Modification

Punishment is often effective as a response to occasional bad behavior. But children who display a consistent pattern of negative behaviors do not improve by discipline alone. These children are maladjusted. They must be treated for the causes of their behavior, as well as for the consequences. In my experience, traditional forms of behavior modification only partially address this need. Behavior modification constitutes a valid approach to the treatment of maladjusted children. But the techniques of behavior modification alone do nothing to alleviate the causes a problem.

Behavior modification is based on a concept of reinforcement. This concept distinguishes between two categories of behavior: **respondent** and **operant**. Respondent behavior is an automatic response to a particular stimulus, such as blinking when suddenly threatened by a fast-approaching object. Behaviors of this type are not susceptible to the techniques of behavior modification. Operant behaviors are thought to be under voluntary control. They include all behaviors which "operate" on, or affect, the outer world of the individual, such as performing a job or hurting someone's feelings. Such behaviors, when consistently detrimental, are an appropriate target for behavior modification.

Operant behavior results in specific consequences for the individual and her environment. The behavior produces a particular response; and this response conditions the behavior, such that a pattern emerges. Any response to a behavior, which increases the probability that it will be repeated, is referred to as a **reinforcer**. Words of praise, token rewards, displays of physical affection, and approval are all examples of reinforcers. Punishment is a negative reinforcer, because it is intended to promote an opposite behavior. For example: A child receives perfect marks at school. This behavior -- scholastic high achievement -- elicits a positive response from her parents, who praise her accomplishments and reward her with money. This response -- because it is desired by the child -- reinforces the achieving behavior. However, her scholastic achievement also elicits high expectations from her parents, and this results in stress for the child who is pressured to succeed. This stress is a negative response, which may reinforce the opposite behavior, to not succeed.

The theory of behavior modification ('conditioning' theory), holds that maladjusted behaviors are conditioned by inappropriate reinforcers. Adolescents are discouraged from using alcohol by negative reinforcement. But if they live in a culture which glorifies recreational drinking -- through advertising, humor, and example of adult role models -- the negative reinforcer is easily subverted. Reinforcement often occurs on separate levels: that of the stated intention and the underlying beliefs which negate that intention. Double messages contain double reinforcers. When in doubt, children tend to follow the hidden reinforcer. Behavior modification seeks to change negative behaviors, by eliminating the hidden reinforcers and replacing them with explicit responses which stimulate change.

The ultimate goal of behavior modification is to help the individual attain what the Rogerians call **self-actualization**. The essential characteristics of the self-actualized person are:

1) acceptance of self and others.
2) clear perception of reality.
3) responsibility for one's own actions and solving of personal problems.
4) capacity for intimacy and commitment in interpersonal relationships.
5) capacity for objective detachment.
6) ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
7) identification with the rest of humanity.
8) richness of subjective experience.
9) spontaneity of self.
10) creativity.

The process of behavior modification begins with the specification of an undesirable behavior. While it may be useful to explain to the individual why a particular behavior is undesirable, this strategy is usually unproductive. The maladjusted child is usually aware of the detrimental consequences of his behavior. But this awareness does not prevent her from acting out. Instead, problem behaviors should be restated in positive terms. The individual is helped to develop positive goals, which can replace the negative behaviors. Phrasing of the goal is very important. For the child who has trouble dealing with anger, the goal may be stated as: when angry at another child, step back from the situation for a period of time, report the problem to a staff worker, or if possible, try to make up with the other child once the anger has passed. This is a more constructive approach than telling a child that she will be punished for fighting with other children. The positive wording of the goal offers her an acceptable alternative to the accustomed behavior which needs to be changed.

Once a goal has been established, a reinforcement schedule is designed to help the child meet this goal. This system will consist of positive reinforcers for the target behavior and negative reinforcers for the undesired behaviors. This phase of behavior modification is termed **contracting**. It is usually a formal process, which includes the specification of a goal and specific mechanisms for its reinforcement. For instance, the child is told that for every time she deals with her anger in the accepted manner, she will receive a token reward; for every instance of unprovoked aggression, a particular privilege will be revoked. The actual process of behavior modification takes effect with the implementation of these reinforcers.

There are three basic types of positive reinforcers: 1) social reinforcers, 2) tangible and token reinforcers, and 3) intrinsic reinforcers. Social reinforcers include words of praise, honorable mentions, and affectionate embraces. Token reinforcers are tangible rewards, or 'tokens' which are exchanged for special privileges. Intrinsic reinforcers come from within, and are derived from feelings of self-esteem and personal capability, as well as standards of morality. Of these three categories, intrinsic reinforcers are the most desirable, because they do not rely on outside responses. Where positive family relations exist, social reinforcers usually lead to the development of intrinsic reinforcers. But institutions (and some parents), rely too much on token reinforcers to change behavior. This is the principal problem with institutional programs for behavior modification: their reinforcement systems tend to be artificial and external to the individual.

According to the theory of conditioning, socialization is a reinforcement process. Unacceptable behaviors are punished; desirable behaviors are rewarded. Because the child begins life with no intrinsic morality of his own, the reinforcement process is initially external. But as he develops, his behaviors are conditioned by the responses of parents, peers and environment in general. At first, he will adopt appropriate behaviors to please his parents. But as he begins to internalize these standards of behavior, he will do so in order to please himself.

When the socialization process is disrupted -- by inconsistent reinforcement, double standards or parental incompetence -- intrinsic reinforcers remain undeveloped. In this case, the child may become maladjusted. Behavior modification attempts to correct such maladjustment, through external reinforcement of positive behaviors. The theory is, that intrinsic reinforcers follow naturally from token and social reinforcement. The aim of contingency contracting is to place the troubled child back on the path of healthy development. It is hoped that artificial reinforcers, applied by the counselor or institution, will eventually be replaced by internal reinforcers.

Youth centers tend to rely on contingency contracting and institutional behavior modification programs in their treatment of behavioral problems. An example of an institutional program is the **token economy**. This is a system of positive reinforcement, in which token credits are awarded for the performance of desired behaviors. These credits are later exchanged for special privileges or tangible goods. In effect, children buy rewards and privileges with good behavior.

On paper, these methods may appear to be quite effective. In practice, they are often disastrous. Street children especially respond to such systems of reinforcement. The token economy appeals to their sense of industry. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, children used token credits to purchase new clothing, candy, and personal goods in a project store. This program was so successful, that a black market soon developed around the token economy. The system was abandoned after we discovered that children were trading the tokens among themselves, in exchange for such illicit services as prostitution and contracted bullying of other kids.

In my experience, formal methods of behavior modification are generally not effective for changing most kinds of negative behavior. To begin with, reinforcement techniques address the consequences of behavior, rather than the causes. The reinforcement principle assumes that behavioral problems are caused by faulty socialization. But many negative behaviors result from biological or genetic endowment, socioeconomic factors, and environmental influences. Techniques of behavior modification may be successful when used in conjunction with other helping methods. But contingency contracting will do little to help a child with an attention deficit disorder cope with frustration.

I have also observed that institutional programs in behavior modification are immensely difficult to implement and maintain. The successful operation of a token economy requires the constant vigilance of project personnel. Maladjusted children are experts at manipulating systems of this sort. Staff must ensure that token credits are not used for illicit purposes. They must also be aware of every little behavior in a program, lest some children go unrewarded. In the long term, institution-wide programs end up rewarding the wrong behaviors, or they are eventually abandoned, owing to the large amount of effort which goes into their operation. What does work, are more personalized methods of reinforcement.

Personalized Attention and Positive Reinforcement

The most useful component of conditioning theory is the concept of positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is the application of a rewarding stimulus, which conditions the individual to repeat the behaviors which elicit that response. It is a basic characteristic of human personality that in most situations we seek to obtain pleasure and avoid pain or uncertainty. Any response which corresponds to this basic human tendency is a positive reinforcer. Therefore, a positive reinforcer is any stimulus which strengthens the behavior which it follows.

To recapitulate from the preceding chapter, there are three categories of positive reinforcers: token, social, and intrinsic. In my opinion, none of these are very effective when implemented on an institutional scale. The problem is that they are too artificial. The more astute youths of a program will be sensitive to this artificiality, and will either reject the system or use it to their own advantage. Institutional programs for behavior modification seem to miss the point regarding positive reinforcement. Children need tangible reinforcement of their positive behaviors. But even more important are social reinforcers, which no institution is able to provide.

The most effective social reinforcers are those which spontaneously occur between child and adult: a warm embrace, words of praise, smile of approval. When an adult caretaker approves of a child's actions and rewards them with an emotionally desirable response, the approved behavior is greatly reinforced. Such responses develop naturally out of interpersonal relationships, not from artificial reinforcement programs.

In general, positive reinforcement is more effective than any form of punishment, because it focuses on the desirable aspects of a child's behavior, rather than the negative. Opposite to positive reinforcement is the self-fulfilling prophecy. Calling a child a liar or a thief reinforces that child's negative opinion of himself. It also creates an expectation to conform to that designated role, and may even convince him that it is futile to try to become anything else. Children who steal are not yet thieves. But most kids don't know what they are, and will readily latch on to the handiest label. If those labels are mostly negative, they will eventually be incorporated into their identity, just as surely as if they were born to them.

When I used to work in drug rehabilitation, we had a saying which pretty well summarizes this labelling process: 'If you treat a man as he is, he will stay as he is... but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become as he ought to be and could be'. This aphorism seems to capture the essence of positive reinforcement at its most effective. Most children want to be good, and are capable of comporting themselves in an acceptable manner. It is not necessary to treat them as if they were well behaved when, in fact, they are not. The important thing is to treat them as if they were capable of being well behaved... which, of course, they are.

Children need this kind of response from individuals, not from institutions. After love, affection, and physical care, children need praise more than any other human response. They need praise, first of all, because they are unsure of themselves -- whether they are good and lovable, whether they can please their parents, whether they can learn to master their more negative impulses.

Praise requires verbal communication on the personal level: 'very good', 'I'm impressed', 'I liked that a lot'. It also requires demonstration: a warm hug, affectionate smile, gesture of appreciation. But it can also be misdirected or overdone. It does little good to tell a child that he is a 'perfect angel'. He knows that he is not. Superlative praise of this sort may only confuse him and create anxiety about having to live up to unrealistic expectations. Praise should always be specific to the behavior. Let the child know exactly what it is that causes approval. It is generally not helpful to tell him, 'You're such a good artist!' when he displays one of his drawings from school. The better approach is to give him some specific feedback: 'I like the way the colors go together, and the expressions on the people's faces... each one looks like they're thinking something different.' This is the kind of praise which helps a child feel certain about his abilities. It helps him know how he has succeeded. Praise of this sort -- 'Your room looks good. You must have worked very hard to get it that clean' -- recognizes his real efforts, as well as his good intentions.

Institutions have a disadvantage over parents, because they simply cannot offer all the personal attention and encouragement that children require. Program personnel may be able to take up some of the slack, but they still cannot take the place of parents as the primary reinforcers of positive behavior. To some extent, it may be necessary for the institution to formalize positive reinforcement with programs for behavior modification. But this should never be a substitute for the kind of personal reinforcement which only an interested, emotionally involved caretaker can provide. The treatment of behavioral problems in the institutional setting largely depends on the capacity of staff to care about children and respond to their needs in a positive fashion. The quality of relationships between staff and children is of prime importance to the success of a center.

Helping Relationships

Peace Corps youth promoters are often called on to help children cope with problems in their lives. Occasionally, the staff of a center will approach the volunteer for advice about how to treat a behavioral problem. Children also come to volunteers with requests for help, or just to talk about things that are troubling them.

Children in distress tend to seek out volunteers to tell their troubles to. This happens for a number of reasons. Peace Corps volunteers do not usually assume positions of authority within their projects. They are therefore not as threatening as the director of a program, teacher, or social worker. They are not usually responsible for disciplining children, and their attitude may be more friendly than professional. Because they are volunteers, and foreigners as well, children will believe that they are there by choice, and not as a matter of economic necessity. In fact, the typical youth promoter possesses many of the qualities which make for an effective helping professional: compassion, respect for human life, and a sincere desire to help other people. Children also admire (and sometimes envy) volunteers: partially because they are American and hail from far away. These reasons make it natural for children to go to volunteers when they feel troubled or alone.

Many children living in a center may continue to suffer from the effects of a traumatic past. In the course of my work at the Centro San Juan Bosco, I was told stories of incestuous rape, infanticide, suicide, and horrendous abuse. Some of these stories were so shocking and appalling that I could barely respond to the children who told them. I often felt of little use to them. Maybe they were not looking for my help. Maybe they only wanted to talk. But they came to me with their agonies; and I would feel at such a loss, because it often seemed that there was nothing I could do to help them.

Children who suffer extreme trauma in their early years often become maladjusted. Some learn to cope with the trauma, and are able to develop on a normal path. But others experience behavioral problems, emotional disturbance, or an inability to bond with others. These children will probably require counseling and other supportive services.

Peace Corps volunteers may not have the therapeutic skills for treating maladjustment in traumatized children. But it is still possible to help these kids -- simply by listening to what they have to say, showing compassion, acceptance, and concern. We cannot, in this way, expect to 'cure' a child of a defective past. But we can make her present a bit more acceptable. Listening to a child, helping her examine the important issues in her life, and providing her with supportive services are all ways of helping children learn to cope. These services are among the major features of a helping relationship, and they are well within the ability of non-specialized volunteers to provide.

The term **helping relationship** generally refers to the formal processes of interviewing, counseling, and psychotherapy. The relationship is structured in such a way that one person helps another to resolve a problem or cope with painful feelings. The term refers to a clinical process; but the work of many Peace Corps volunteers can also be described in terms of a helping relationship. Peace Corps youth promoters are very much concerned with providing services and help to children in need. In this respect, they, too, are helping professionals.

Most volunteers lack the formal skills to practice therapy or conduct an 'interview' (the basic process for gathering information about a person, for the purposes of helping them with a problem or difficult situation). They do, however, possess many of the personal qualities which make for an effective helping relationship. The most important of these interpersonal skills are: empathy, respect for humanity and concern for individuals, cultural sensitivity, and commitment to helping other people. These qualities count for a lot, and volunteers should not let a lack of formal training deter them from responding to a child in need of help. Some professionals will disagree with me on this point. But in many situations, where professional help is simply not available, it is all but impossible not to intervene. In such instances, the volunteer will do what he must in order to help a child. He will falter at times and make mistakes; but in most cases, this is better than doing nothing. Even if solutions are not forthcoming, the child will know that there is someone on her side. Sometimes, that is enough.

Many severely traumatized children require intensive help, which the Peace Corps volunteer is unable to provide. Short of offering solutions to their problems, about all he can do is listen to their troubles. This is a relatively easy service to provide, though to do it well, requires a great deal of skill. The following section offers some guidelines for the use of this very important helping skill.

Before we proceed, I would like to point out that most of the problems of childhood are not of a traumatic order.

When we speak of personal crises in the lives of these children, we tend to think of the rapes, abuse, and abandonment which have led to their institutionalization. But the most common problems for children in these centers have to do with the normal issues of childhood and adolescence: scholastic achievement, peer approval, sexuality, and role confusion. In these areas, the volunteer should be able to draw on his own experience and personal skills to help a child. By loosely adhering to the principles of intentional counseling and interviewing listed below he may also be able to solve many of the problems which children commonly present to youth center staff.

Techniques of Counseling and Interviewing

'Interviewing', in the clinical sense of the term, is a process of gathering information, problem solving, and giving of advice or information. Counseling is generally more intense and personal, and longer in duration, than interviewing. It is a process of helping normal people cope with normal problems. 'Intentionality' is the informed use of a variety of skills and approaches which facilitate this process. The intentional counselor has no one method for dealing with a problem. When a method isn't working, he tries something else. Because he is practiced in a variety of techniques and approaches, he eventually hits on the right solution to a particular problem.

Peace Corps youth promoters may possess the rudimentary skills for counseling and interviewing (empathy, insight and listening skills). What they generally lack is intentionality. It is doubtful that any counselor can develop this skill without close supervision from an experienced professional. It can only come of study and extensive practice.

The purpose of this section is to help volunteers develop their listening and helping skills. Though currently a graduate student of social work, I do not have the knowledge or ability to instruct other people to become effective counselors. What I can do, is share some common information and very basic guidelines for conducting a helping relationship.

There are four basic steps in the counseling process:

1) engagement: establishing a relationship with the client and creating an atmosphere conducive to sharing painful emotions.
2) contracting: exploring the problem and potential solutions; agreeing to work on a solution together.
3) information gathering: collecting information pertinent to the problem (from the client, other professionals, family or friends... with discretion and respect for her privacy, of course).
4) solving the problem: supporting the client and

providing her with concrete services which will enable her to resolve the problem.

In order to engage a client in this process, the counselor must be able to enter her belief system. He must understand how the client thinks, feels, and operates -- including her moral standards, religious and cultural beliefs, aspirations and motivations, and environmental influences. This requires a very broad understanding of human behavior.

Intentional counseling also requires empathy, or an attunement to the client. Such attunement is demonstrated through **attending behavior**. This is behavior which encourages a client to talk openly and freely, and share her feelings. It is a way of showing interest in a client by listening to what she says. This includes 'body language' as well as vocal communication. Allen Ivey, developer of the 'microskills' counseling approach, identifies four basic attending behaviors:

1) eye contact
2) attentive body language
3) verbal qualities (vocal tone and rate of speech)
4) verbal tracking (staying with the topic indicated by the client)

'Paraphrasing' is one very important attending skill. This is the reformulation or repetition of a statement by the client, to show that you are listening and that you are interested in understanding what she has to say. It also helps to clarify vague or uncertain statements. 'Reflection of meaning' and 'reflection of feeling' have a similar purpose. Reflection is a technique for helping a client focus on the unspoken meaning or feelings behind a statement:

client: I couldn't believe he would do that to me. I didn't deserve to be treated like that.
counselor: It hurts a lot to be abandoned by someone you love.
client: Yah... it hurt me a lot.

Other attending skills include summarization and encouraging. 'Encouragers' are behaviors which encourage a client to go on talking. These can be gestures (nod of the head, inquisitive look), or minimal verbal utterances ("Ummmm", "Uh huh"). Silence, accompanied by appropriate gestures, is another type of encourager. In summarization, the counselor "attends to verbal and nonverbal comments from the client over a period of time and then selectively attends to key concepts and dimensions, restating them for the client as accurately as possible." (Ivey, Allen. Intentional Interviewing and Counseling. Brooks/Cole Publishing,

p. 96) The purpose of summarization is to clarify the salient points of a client's problem.

In addition to attending skills, the counselor also needs to develop assessment, influencing, and problem attack skills. 'Assessment' is a process of gathering information as to where a client stands in relation to her problem. This skill enables the counselor to determine the **developmental level** ('intentionality', or the client's ability to cope with a problem; this ability it commonly indicated by such terms as **stuckness, blocks, immobility, lack of motivation, repetition compulsion, limited behavioral repertoire**). Hersey and Blanchard have identified four basic levels of client development:

1) client is 'stuck'; no alternatives, or limited range of possibilities; lacks skills, needs to be told what to do.
2) client has partial insight into her problem; possesses skills, but not always able to use them; stuck on several issues.
3) client has insight but needs support.
4) client is able to generate a wide range of alternatives; seeks counseling mainly as a matter of self learning.

Counselors and interviewers need to possess assessment skills -- in order to determine what approaches and supports will benefit the client most. Development of these skills requires an extensive knowledge of human behavior, social systems and available resources for helping clients.

'Influencing' skills are interpersonal behaviors which exert a direct influence upon a client, usually for the purpose of changing a maladaptive behavior or undesirable situation. Allen Ivey has identified eight such basic skills:

1) directives - indicating what actions the counselor wishes the client to take.
2) logical consequences - indicating the likely consequences of a client's actions.
3) self-disclosure - indicating one's own thoughts and feelings to a client.
4) feedback - providing information about how the client is viewed by other people.
5) interpretation - providing the client with an alternative frame of reference for viewing her situation.
6) influencing summary - summarizing what a counselor has said during an interview.
7) information/advice - providing the client with information and advice about her situation.
8) confrontation - pointing out incongruities,

discrepancies, or mixed messages in a client's behaviors, thoughts and feelings.

'Problem attack' skills are what finally help a client to resolve a problem or undesirable situation. These include attending, assessment, and influencing behaviors, as well as advocating on the client's behalf, and connecting her to resources.

At some point in the counseling process, the client will have to come to terms with negative feelings. The sharing of painful feelings is an essential part of the helping process. The counselor's ability to handle these feelings in a constructive manner greatly affects the outcome of an issue. At times, the counselor may have to ask some potentially hurtful question, or focus the client on painful issues. He can help the client to constructively deal with these negatives by:

1) posing questions in a way that can be answered.
2) defining the problem in solvable terms.
3) asking for information in a non-judgemental manner.
4) pointing to the client's assets.
5) investing the client with control and accountability.
6) adhering to a policy of strict confidentiality.
7) providing information and advice.
8) pointing out discrepancies in behavior and words.
9) pointing out double messages and nonverbal communications.
10) accentuating the idea of good intentions.
11) translating anger into hurt.
12) discussing openly the topics which the client is fearful of discussing.
13) recognizing when social change, not individual change, is the key to solving a problem.

What we have here is a very general outline of the helping process. Most Peace Corps volunteers will obviously not be able conduct formal interviews or counseling sessions. Neither should they consider the youths of a center as their "clients". But these guidelines may be useful to volunteers who wish to open up lines of communication and be of greater service to the children they work with. Many of these skills are just as appropriate for informal helping relationships. Volunteers who are interested in becoming more effective helpers should refer to the literature listed in the back of this manual. It is probably impossible to become an effective counselor by reading alone. But studying these skills can help one be a better listener and problem solver.

Developing a Practice Theory

Whether the staff of a center know it or not, their efforts to help children and their responses to children's behaviors are largely guided by their personal practice theories. One youth worker believes that unruly behavior should be punished with a belt. Another worker believes that too much emphasis on a child's negative characteristics can produce a self-fulfilling prophecy. The director of the center believes that the negative behaviors of these children are learned by association with other children living in the street, and that treatment consists of removing them from the corruptive environment. These beliefs about how to deal with disruptive behavior in children are all examples of practice theory. The different attitudes represented by these hypothetical youth workers have firm roots in established behavioral theory, although the workers themselves may be unaware of this relation. **Youth Worker A** believes that the application of an aversive response (a spanking), is the most effective method of changing a negative behavior. **Youth Worker B** believes that identifying a child as 'bad' will actually encourage the child to believe he is bad, and thereby act in the expected negative manner. The **Program Director** believes that negative behaviors can be 'unlearned' by removing the child from the corruptive environment. These varying belief systems about behavior have indirect ties, respectively, to the theoretical positions of 'conditioning', 'labelling', and 'learning' theories.

The problem in many youth centers is that program staff fail to recognize the practical implications and effects of their personal beliefs about children's behavior. There may be connections between currently held theory and the personal orientations of individual youth workers. But unless these connections are consciously acknowledged in the worker's practice orientation -- unless they are 'intentional' -- they serve no useful purpose. Youth workers who fail to consider the theoretical bases of their practice beliefs are likely to be 'non-intentional' -- that is, less than effective, or even inappropriate.

Youth Worker A believes that the belt is the most effective tool for changing a negative behavior. If she were to examine this belief, she might discover that it is vaguely related to the conditioning theory of behaviorists. The reinforcement principle of this theory holds that the application of an aversive stimulus, such as a beating, can be an effective deterrent to future misbehaviors. What the uninformed worker may not know, is that behaviorist theorists do not generally recommend the practice of corporal punishment. Instead, they advocate the use of less violent sanctions (such as 'cost response'), which are almost always linked to a plan for **positive** reinforcement -- the other side of the reinforcement principle. My point is that the non-intentional youth worker -- the worker who acts solely on intuition, unexamined beliefs, or force of habit -- will be less than effective in her dealings with children. The strict disciplinarian may not realize that positive reinforcement is a necessary complement of any form of negative conditioning. However, were she to examine some of the theoretical assumptions implicit in her attitude, she might see reason to re-examine her beliefs and possibly modify her child-rearing practices.

I would argue that even generalist youth promoters need to develop a personal practice theory. This case study is in effect a statement about my own practice theory. It is the culmination of my experiences and ideas about working with children and others in need. In most cases, I have tried to relate this personal experience and thought to some established body of knowledge or theory; and I have found this approach to be most useful in all of my professional endeavors.

The theory **per se** does not make a capable worker. Youth promoters will also need to draw on personal experience, emotions such as empathy, a sense of morality, and to some extent, intuition. The practice theory they do develop must also be **intentional** -- that is, deliberate and well informed. It is not enough to have a theory... the theory must be demonstrable: it must enable the practitioner to make an accurate prediction about a behavior in the majority of cases. A practice theory must also be pertinent: it must have practical applications for the work at hand.

I think that many of the mistakes I made as a Youth Development volunteer were due to the fact that I did not have an intentional practice theory. At the beginning of my service with the Centro San Juan Bosco, I did not know a lot about child development and behavior. I frequently did not understand why the children of this center behaved the way they did. As a result, I did not always know how to respond to their negative behaviors. Looking back, I believe that my reactions were often inappropriate. Now I know that I might have benefited a great deal from having known a little more about human behavior and methods for helping others in need.

In this chapter I have presented the reader with a very basic outline of some the current major theories on childhood development and behavior. I do not pretend to be an expert on any of this material. But hopefully, there will be some readers of this study who will find this information to be of interest and value. I am not in a position to instruct any other person in the methods of counseling or the many different theories of child development. This is not my intention. But I do hope that readers will give thought to these matters, and perhaps feel inspired to explore these ideas in greater depth. Such readers should refer to the resource list, included in this study, for further readings on these topics.

CHAPTER THREE: DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF YOUTH CENTERS

Youth Centers as Total Institutions

Most residential programs for homeless youths are, in effect, total institutions. Youths live within the project -- usually in a compound or barracks-style dormitories -- at a distance from their families and many of their peers. They are expected to adjust to daily regimens of work, schooling, and even recreation. Limits are placed on their personal freedom, and they are expected, perhaps for the first time in their lives, to comply with new standards of discipline and behavior. They may also be isolated from the rest of society. For these children, the youth center is society: it constitutes their principal social reality.

In many developing nations, institutionalization may seem to be the only solution to the problem of homelessness in children. The ideal response would be to provide family services which can prevent the separation of children from their parents. But many poor countries have neither the resources nor the infrastructure to work with families on such an individualized basis. Institutional-type programs exist because there is a tendency to wait for crises to occur before taking action.

Most residential programs provide a number of necessary services to children in need. The foremost of these is the removal of children from the streets and placing them in a healthier environment. But institutionalization has its costs, both to children and staff. Perhaps these centers cannot help being total institutions. But youth center staff should know that life in the institution is often made more unpleasant than it has to be.

The Harmful Effects of Institutionalization

Life in an institution is often oppressive. In its worst aspect it may be characterized by social isolation, restriction of freedom, dreary routine, and overregulation. These limitations weigh heavily on children and often make for conflict in a center. While such institutions may not be prisons, they tend to insist on too much control.

The world of most institutions is in a sense unreal. In many live-in centers, youths are isolated from the life of the community. They eat, sleep, play, work, and sometimes even go to school within the institution. This kind of insularity can lead to the creation of a separate reality. Many such programs boast paternalistic names like 'The Children's Village' and 'The Big Family', as if to proclaim their separateness from the rest of the world. This separateness is evident in a kind of subculture which develops within the institution. Institutional customs, norms, and even language are all features of the culture of separateness. This specialized culture of separateness may actually conflict with the mainstream culture of a society -- because many programs take the position that society has rejected these children and, therefore, no longer has a place for them. The program 'fathers' see it as their duty to protect these children from a life of continued abuse and exploitation. Many such programs are highly successful at saving young lives. But their pronounced paternalism ill-prepares the young person for his inevitable return to the real world. In fact, many youths never leave the security of the institution, but go on to become lifelong employees of the "village" or "fam-ily".

When a center becomes too closed from the rest of the world, the interests of the institution begin to take precedence over needs of individuals. Controls are implemented to protect these interests, and conflict develops between 'self' and community. When this happens, youths usually respond in one of two ways: they reject the authority of those in charge, resist the institution and rebel against its rules; or they accept its norms and learn to depend on its protection and authority.

Institutional control is not just a matter of disciplining undesirable behavior. It is actually most prevalent in the procedures and routines established by a program. Total institutions regulate every aspect of a child's life -- from the profession he prepares for, to the correct procedure for showering in the morning. At one center I visited in Honduras, the staff were proud to show me a system they developed for obliging children to brush their teeth. Individual brushes were labeled with a number and hung in order on a board beside the sink. Immediately following every meal, the children were made to collect their brushes and wait in line for a teacher to give them each a dab of toothpaste. Then they had to wait again in another line to brush their teeth, one at a time. In this way, each child could be monitored as he brushed his teeth. Brushes weren't lost and toothpaste wasn't wasted. In economic and organizational terms, this arrangement was most efficient. But what of the self esteem and personal dignity of all the children who are made to wait in line for a dab of toothpaste? Depersonalization of this sort is degrading to children. It is threatening to their sense of self and causes them to resent the persons responsible for such affronts to their dignity.

In the total institution, children are expected to comply with a system of procedures and routines which:

1) limit their movement within the project.
2) denies them opportunities to chose their companions for leisure activities.

3) limits their use of "free" time.
4) dictates their style of dress.
5) limits visits from family and friends.
6) places restrictions on how they spend their money.
7) conforms their lives to schedules.

The institution which adopts such controls is more concerned with order than the welfare of its children. The staff of such projects value qualities of submissiveness above independence. Children who resent this attitude will likely develop a set of counter-values which upholds a standard for non-cooperation with adult authorities. In this way, antagonisms grow between children and adults. The institution will then find itself hard put to maintain the order it desires, and will likely resort to tighter controls. The result is a no-win situation for the staff of a center. Children can always leave a project, but the center cannot survive without their presence and cooperation.

Deinstitutionalization

Some degree of depersonalization is inevitable in any program housing large groups of children. But it is still possible to humanize an institution, making it more livable for residents and staff. This can be done in a number of ways: by personalizing living quarters, eliminating monotonous routines, and providing children access to the world outside.

Many centers have better educational facilities than those found in the public system. But there is one important advantage of sending kids to public schools (apart from the reduced cost to the project): it gives them time away from the center and creates opportunities for them to mix with other children. Public schools constitute an important link to the outside world. Friendships are established with peers who live in the community, and opportunities arise for interned youths to participate in social activities away from the program. This results in a more normal self-concept for children unable to live with their parents.

Regarding recreational activities within a center, it is important to balance organized events with opportunities for spontaneous play. Programs should invest in materials and equipment for recreation. But it is preferable -- more economical and better for the children -- to make use of recreational facilities in the community (playgrounds, swimming areas, playing fields and basketball courts). Responsible youths should also be allowed to spend their free time away from the center, with peers in the community.

Institutional environments can also be improved in the following ways:

1) personalize living quarters: no more than four

children to a single room, and twelve children to a housing unit; install secure doors in bathrooms, individual shower stalls for privacy; meals should be served in individual dining rooms, rather than a centralized cafeteria.

2) provide children with individual lockers or closets for storage of clothing and personal possessions; they should also be allowed to keep a personal tube of toothpaste, towel, bar of soap, etc.
3) have a variety of activities and programs in the center, so children have a choice in what they do, and with whom they do it.
4) encourage youths to be a part of the community by allowing them to participate in extra-curricular school activities, social service projects, and team sports.
5) provide areas in the project which can serve as retreats from the center of activity (an outdoor chapel, ornamental fish pond, or flower garden).
6) do not require the wearing of uniforms; if possible children should be allowed to select the clothing they wear.
7) alternate schedules and routines as often as possible.
8) encourage families and friends to visit children at the center; allow them to visit their families at home.
9) allow children free use of leisure time during the day.
10) help them obtain spending money for entertainment and personal needs.
11) serve appealing meals and vary the institutional diet.

All institutions regulate behavior. This is a necessary function of the institution. But program staff must understand that the institution exists to benefit children -- to help them grow, not to control them. A center should therefore be flexible with its schedules and routines, rules and regulations. It is important to remember that each child is an individual, deserving of dignity, trust, and respect. The institution which really makes an effort to personalize its care of youths will find that they, in turn, are more cooperative, happier, and easier to work with.

Alternatives to Institutionalization

The institutionalization of a child should always be a last resort measure. But it often happens that residential programs aggravate the very situation they are trying to correct. They do so by accepting children who do not actually need live-in care. By offering children a better way of life than the family can provide, some centers actually encourage parents to abandon their offspring. In fact, the more successful a program is, the more justified parents feel about relinquishing their parental responsibilities.

Most children are better off living with their families. They may not receive the same opportunities as those which are had in the child-care facility. But at least they can live in the community and belong to a family. Except in cases where extreme neglect or abuse are a problem, children should be helped to remain with their parents. Live-in centers should not accept children referred by their parents, unless there is a compelling reason for removing them from the home environment. Unfortunately, many programs continue to take children on request from the parents.

Parents usually entrust their children to an institution out of economic necessity, or because of abuse by another family member. Less frequently, they do so out of selfishness, or because they lack the skills to care for them. Whatever the reason within the family, institutionalization is often not the only solution. If at all possible, youth programs should try to work with children in their homes.

One project in Honduras, Menor Vendedor de Periódicos (young sellers of newspapers), has been very successful at helping at-risk youths who live at home. These are mostly working children who make an economic contribution to the family. They typically belong to poor but loving parents who, for various reasons, are unable to satisfy their basic needs. If not for this program, some of them might be candidates for institutionalization in a live-in facility. Menor Vendedor de Periodicos enables them to live with their families, by providing them with the services they lack -- educational, nutritional, recreational, and medical. If more such programs existed around the world, there would be less need for traditional orphanages or training schools for delinquent youths.

Even in the case of homeless street children, institutionalization need not be the only course of treatment. Acción Guambras of Mexico has developed a program for assisting homeless youths in an informal, non-institutional setting. This excellent project has no "center"; there is no facility for children to attend. Rather, the program goes to them, reaching out to children in their own environment -- the street. The program does not have the typical structure of a live-in center: no dining hall, clinic, rec-room or school. Its only resource is the 'street educator' -- an adult professional who appeals to kids on their own turf, in their own terms, supporting their efforts to obtain a better way of life.

This type of program is implemented in the following stages:

1. A governing board is formed to raise funds for the educators' salaries, and a director is hired to administer the project.

2. Street educators are hired, trained, and then assigned to work in specific zones of the city frequented by street kids (markets, parks, red-light districts).

3. The street educator regularly appears in the community and befriends children by talking and playing with them.

4. The street educator organizes children into a group, which meets informally to engage in recreational activities and talk about their situation.

5. The street educator helps children obtain legal documentation (an official I.d. card which identifies them as participating in the program, under protection of the juvenile justice system).

6. The street educator helps children identify goals for improving their lives (obtaining food, housing, clothing, income).

7. The street educator mobilizes the group to pursue these goals.

8. The street educator mobilizes the community to support the group and help them with their goals.

The critical steps in this process involve the organization of youths into a cohesive group and the specification of common goals. Until then, the street educator merely engages the group in leisure activities, in order to gain their attention and trust. She does not preach about changing their behavior or bettering their lives. But eventually, if she is patient with these children and makes an effort to show them her concern, they will begin to speak to her about matters of importance in their lives. At this point, she assumes an active role -- organizing them into a cooperative group and helping them establish primary goals.

The group, once formed, may want to begin by improving their diet or housing situation. The street educator announces her willingness to help them and asks what they are willing to contribute towards the goal. There are no hand-outs in such a program; the group must work for whatever goals it hopes to attain. For example: Members of the group are already spending a significant portion of their income on food. Despite this expense, their diets are inadequate. They would like to improve their diet, and still have money for other needs. The street educator explains that by pooling their resources they can buy more food. Each member will then be asked to contribute money to a communal fund for the purchase of food.

Now begins the work of community organization. The group canvasses local merchants and charitable institutions for donations of food. Whatever food they cannot obtain this way, they purchase with money from the communal fund. The group has accomplished part of its goal. But they still need a place where the food can be prepared and served. So they look for support from the owners of local dining places, requesting that they serve the group in exchange for cleaning up the kitchen and other helpful services.

The key element of this program is the street educator. Street children generally have the initiative and ability to work for the things they want. But they need the influence of a concerned adult to help them get started, organize their efforts, and advocate on their behalf. The personal style, attitude, and commitment of the educator largely determine the success of the program, which does not depend on elaborate facilities or material resources. It depends, instead, upon the individual qualities of the youth promoter, which is perhaps its greatest advantage.

Essential characteristics of the street educator are:

1) her primary function is to support youths and provide them with basic services which they identify as relevant and necessary; it is not her role to change their behavior or make them conform to the rules of society.
2) she works with youths on their own terms, in their own environment.
3) she does not impose her personal values on them; she helps them determine their goals without coercion.
4) she does not force her help on them; she waits for them to ask for her assistance.
5) she is democratic rather than authoritarian, an organizer rather than a director.
6) she encourages youths to work for things they want; she doesn't give hand-outs.
7) the form of her support is moral, not material.
8) she involves the community in this process.

CHAPTER FOUR: EDUCATION

Educational Support for Disadvantaged Youths

In Chapter Three, "Deinstitutionalization of Youth Centers", I discussed the advantages of a public education for youths who live in residential programs. Residents of live-in centers should be enrolled in public schools, in order that they may experience more of life in the community. However, public schools are often inadequate at the task of educating such disadvantaged children. Many of these children function far below grade level. They have special needs, which public schools are unprepared to satisfy. It is therefore a function of most youth centers to assist them academically, and provide them with remedial services, so they may succeed in school.

Residential youth centers need to have programs in supported education, just to make up for the many disadvantages faced by these children. Most of them lack parents who can encourage and support them in their studies, and many have had no schooling prior to admission in the center. Malnutrition and substance abuse may have impaired their intellectual functioning. Low self-esteem is yet another factor adversely affecting scholastic achievement. Some children have had to work since an early age, attending school sporadically, if at all. Many of these children do not begin their primary education until the onset of adolescence, and will obviously be uncomfortable in a classroom full of other students younger than themselves.

The public school systems of many developing nations are often unresponsive to the special needs of the severely disadvantaged. Yet this group of children are the ones most in need of a decent education. Many of them have no parents to turn to for support. Their prospects in life -- grim to begin with -- will not improve unless they acquire some basic academic skills. In order for them to survive in school and eventually be a part of mainstream society, they will need considerable support from the caretaking facility.

In many centers, academic support is provided by houseparents who live with the children. It is their responsibility to see that children go to school, complete their assignments, and study for exams. But these employees are hired primarily for their caretaking skills. They often lack a formal education, and may be ill-equipped to assist children with their studies. An effective program for remedial education requires the full-time attention of a qualified teacher or program director. This person should be prepared to do more than supervise homework and school attendance: he would be responsible for the development of an integrated program, to include such services as individual tutoring, supplemental classes, and recreational learning activities.

Peace Corps volunteers may contribute greatly to the development of an academic support program within a project. Program development and evaluation, staff training, and individual assessment of children are all appropriate areas for volunteer involvement.

Assessment is an especially needed service in projects of this type. Generalist volunteers may not have the skills to help children overcome a learning disability or other problem in school. But with training, even the generalist can learn to detect problems and identify special needs. In the absence of specialized personnel, the volunteer should be able to recognize a learning problem and know where to refer children for attention. He should also be aware of the most common types of learning disabilities. If he is knowledgeable about the techniques of special education, he may even work with disabled individuals. But even if he does not posses specialized skills, a basic understanding of learning theory and disabilities will help him to be more effective. The volunteer who is familiar with these concepts will be more sensitive to the needs of learning disabled children and better able to give them support.

Learning Problems: Disadvantage Versus Disability

'Learning disability' is an umbrella term, used to describe a variety of different organic conditions which may impede learning and intellectual functioning. Affected children usually display a significant discrepancy between their intellectual ability (or potential ability), and academic achievement. This discrepancy between ability and performance is usually manifested in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, and mathematical reasoning. Disabilities may be due to such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia or developmental aphasia. In its proper meaning, the term **learning disability** does not include visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural and economic disadvantages.

It is important to bear in mind that the above definition of learning disability has evolved from the educational systems of the developed world. It is based on findings and research conducted mostly in the United States and Europe, where school systems are better funded and generally more progressive. In the United States, the term **learning disability** is as much a legal definition (used to determine which children are entitled to participate in publicly funded special education programs under the Education for

All Handicapped Children Act of 1975), as a diagnostic category.

The Western concept of learning disabilities may also be applied to less developed nations. But in many of these countries, where standards are lower and the socioeconomic disadvantages are so much greater, definitions need to be adjusted. Educators may be unable to detect or adequately respond to special learning needs in the classroom. In some cultures, many learning disabilities are misinterpretted as a form of retardation. Affected students are often thought to be unteachable. Even when learning disabilities are correctly identified, a country may not have the resources to provide learning disabled students with the kind of individualized attention they require. These same faults also exist to a lesser degree in the United States. But in many parts of the developing world, where funding for education is limited, the problems are exacerbated.

Volunteers may observe that nearly all the children in their projects are low academic achievers. A large percentage of these children may have specific learning disabilities. But most of the learning problems encountered in these programs are attributable to socioeconomic and cultural factors, rather than organic disorders. Many of these children are attending school for the first time at a very late age. The reading skills of a 13-year-old, entering the first grade, will be far below the norm. Her academic progress may actually be slower than some 7-year-olds at the same level, because she feels stupid or is uncomfortable in a classroom with other children half her age. Her ability to learn new information may also be diminished. Even when children begin school at an early age, attendance is often intermittent, due to illness, economic hardship or apathy of the parents. When parental support is lacking, children tend to perform below their potential. Lack of relevancy in the school curriculum, poor health, low self-esteem and economic need are also factors affecting achievement. In addition to these impediments faced by individual children, many schools fail to meet acceptable standards. Teachers may be underqualified and resources lacking. Given this scenario of socioeconomic disadvantage and school system inadequacy, is it even relevant to speak of underachievement and learning disability?

In terms of education, what the developing world really needs are better schools and training for teachers. It is difficult to address the needs of individual students, when the system itself is in such a mess. But within each youth center, individual needs still exist and must be attended. Program staff should therefore consider the educational needs of all children in the project, not just those who are "learning disabled". Special education for children with disabilities may be included in the program for supported education. But the focus of such a program should be on the larger socioeconomic disadvantages which affect learning and scholastic achievement.

Developing an Academic Support Program

Where public school systems are inadequate, youth centers should include programs which can provide support to academically disadvantaged children. In its most basic aspect, the academic support program may be structured in the fashion of a study hall. It is a good idea to set aside a period of time during the evening, which can be devoted to studies and other educational activities. The study period may then be divided into sections, according to grade and academic needs.

It is important to give some consideration to the setting for these activities. The study environment should be free of distractions from radio or television, but not so empty as to seem sterile. Libraries make excellent settings for learning programs. They should be equipped with blackboards, tables, desks, and appropriate learning materials. Adequate lighting is also important. In addition to these basics, the study environment should also have a decorative touch. Wall maps, globes, an aquarium, and various science displays in the library of the Centro San Juan Bosco, made this the most appealing area in the entire project.

The academic support program should be designed to suit the needs of children in the project. But at the same time, budgetary concerns are likely to limit or determine its scope. As in all aspects of social service, human resources are of greater value than material ones. The agency's first priority should therefore be the hiring of a qualified person to coordinate the program. This person can attend to the development of resource materials, as well as lending structure and direction to the program.

Program coordination has two basic parts: collaboration with educators in the public school system, and informal education activities with children in the center. It is important for workers at the center to have regular contact with public schools. This is in order that project staff may effectively monitor students' attendance, academic progress, special needs, and conduct in the classroom. The center's own informal education program should also be coordinated with public schoolteachers' lesson plans. The other part of the program is assisting students in their overall academic development: tutoring them and helping them with homework; supplementing their formal education and stimulating learning; helping them to feel academically competent. These functions may be performed by the program coordinator, but other personnel -- house mothers, volunteers, and vocational instructors -- should also be involved in this process.

The main purpose of the support program is to help students with their academic needs (this can be done during regularly scheduled study periods; an hour each evening should be sufficient, though some students may also need additional tutoring). Scholastic reinforcement is of primary importance. But the education program may also serve other needs. The learning process does not cease outside of the classroom; 'education' encompasses all aspects of a child's life. The program for supported education should appeal to children on several levels -- not just the academic. Personal relevancy and the joy of learning should also be considered in the process.

Hands-on learning activities and educational games should complement the study program. These activities should be selected for their recreational value, as well educational impact. A good example is 'math bingo' -- similar to the standard game of bingo, except that players must perform simple mathematical calculations to fill-in squares on playing cards. The principal value of this and other fun learning activities is that they stimulate learning, even as they entertain. The message they give is that learning can be fun; that education is worth pursuing for the sake of enjoyment and personal enrichment.

The center of the program is the study hall, where students work on academic skills. But what happens outside of formal study periods -- at home, at work and at play -- is equally important. The educational systems of many developing nations tend to overlook this fact. They also tend to ignore the total needs and development of children. In many countries, children are taught to copy or conform, rather than to think for themselves. Hands-on learning is neglected in the classroom; rote memorization is the norm. In Honduras, I observed that subjects such as history, science, and social studies were commonly taught by requiring students to copy passages out of text book. More often than not, grades were based on handwriting skills, rather than comprehension.

Many public schoolteachers have neither the resources, nor the preparation, to conduct interesting, relevant classes. As a supplement to public education, a center may choose to conduct classes and learning projects of its own. It is a good idea to begin with the development of a small library or resource center. Such a facility can serve as the hub for a variety of activities, both educational and recreational. Some of the projects we based out of the resource center of the Centro San Juan Bosco include: a project newspaper, science club, reading program, book binding and repair, arts & crafts, tropical fish aquaria, and nature museum.

Extra-curricular activities of this type should emphasize creative, relevant, participatory learning. Children should be encouraged to learn by doing: preparing exhibits of butterflies and insects for an in-house nature museum, hiking through nearby forests, learning about science in a kitchen lab. Some of these activities may require more material resources than a center can provide. But other projects, like the formation of an environmental science club, require only a dynamic leader and the willing participation of interested youths.

Older children should be consulted on many of the issues affecting their education. They should experience education as a process in which they, as students, participate. This will happen only if they are involved in decision-making processes. Allow them to pursue topics of study relevant to their lives an personal interests... to select the books for a library collection... to set an agenda for their academic future.

In every center there are a few children who love learning and excel in school. It is not a good idea to use these students as examples for the others. Such singling out only breeds resentment and feelings of inadequacy in other children. High-achieving students can be an asset to the educational staff of a program -- but not as 'examples'. Instead, it is better to employ their talents for helping other children, who might otherwise be neglected. Use them as tutors, library helpers and teaching assistants. Not only is this an effective use of human resources -- it is a real instance of participatory learning.

A coordinated effort on the part of program staff and youths of a project can result in higher academic achievement for all children. Individual learning needs may differ for each child. But by focusing on common disadvantages and difficulties, the project will be able to help a larger group of children.

Special Education for Children with Learning Disabilities

Most learning difficulties experienced by Third World children probably result from socioeconomic disadvantages. But in this same class of children there is also a high incidence of learning disabilities. Children whose learning difficulties result from economic deprivation or emotional disturbance need a great deal of academic support. Children who also have a learning disability need even more. In addition to the kind of group support discussed above, they will also require specialized attention, to address their specific learning needs.

Most Youth Development volunteers do not have the training to conduct classes in special education. Most youth projects do not have the resources to hire a special education teacher. But a Peace Corps volunteer can be of great service, simply by being aware of the needs of exceptional children (learning disabled, handicapped, retarded and gifted), and the special services that may be available to them within a region.

No special knowledge is required to recognize the possible existence of a learning disability. Generalist volunteers, familiar with the basics of special education, should be able to identify a problem. At the very least, they can recommend children for evaluation. Youth promoters should be aware of special education programs within their region, so they can refer children for appropriate services. Even if this is all they can do to help, it is still a significant first step in the total treatment process.

Identification of Learning Disabilities

The non-specialist should not attempt to identify specific learning disabilities. An incorrect diagnosis can actually do more harm than good. Even when a disability has been positively identified, program staff should avoid the use of labels which may damage a child's self-concept. Generalists should only seek to identify problems, leaving diagnostics and treatment to qualified professionals (if any are available). What follows here is an outline of the general disabilities affecting learning and how they should be handled within a center.

Learning disabilities are identified in a number of ways. The first step of identification is to determine if a student's academic achievement corresponds to her estimated academic potential. This is usually done by comparing intelligence and aptitude test scores with scholastic performance. But in many countries, test scores may be unreliable or even non-existent. In this case, counselors must rely on grades to indicate the existence of a problem. Even grades are often unreliable. It is a good idea for youth centers to evaluate all children experiencing difficulty in school. This may include the vast majority of children living in a project. But it is certainly worthwhile to evaluate them all -- just to determine which problems result from organic disabilities, as opposed to other kinds of disadvantages.

Learning disabilities commonly affect the following areas of intellectual functioning: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, reading skills and comprehension, mathematical calculation and mathematical reasoning. Their effects may be observed in speech patterns, writing samples, schoolwork, behavior and motor activity. Children who display marked difficulties in any of these areas should be referred for evaluation.

The first step in the evaluation process is to determine that the learning difficulties are not caused by visual or auditory impairment, or physical limitations. Next, observe the child -- at school, doing homework, interacting with other children -- making note of significant problems. Also, ask teachers for information about the student's conduct, progress and attendance. Proper evaluation of a learning disability also requires the ruling out of other causes and contributing factors. The diagnostic method is basically a process of elimination. To verify the existence of an organic disability, it is necessary, first, to explore the other possibilities. Are teachers at fault for a student's troubles? Has his schooling been interrupted? Has the student been ill? Does he attend classes? Abuse drugs? Get along with other children? If the answers to these questions still point to an organic condition (ie., learning disability), then it is time to look at specific symptoms. The following list is a summary of some of the more common characteristics of learning disorders:

> hyperactivity: child is restless and fidgety; excessive movement and motor activity (often the cause of behavioral problems).
>
> hypoactivity: opposite of hyperactivity; child is lethargic, inactive.
>
> inattention: inability to concentrate at any one activity for an extended period of time.
>
> overattention: relentless focusing on an object or activity for long periods of time.
>
> poor coordination: difficulty writing and other fine motor skills; generally clumsy.
>
> perceptual disorders: disorders of visual, auditory, tactual, or kinesthetic perception; unable to copy letters correctly, perceive differences in geometric shapes; reversal of letters or numbers, mirrored writing; unable to perceive differences in consonant blends, distinguish similar sounds; confuses order or letters or numbers.
>
> perseveration: persistent repetition, especially in writing or copying.
>
> memory disorders: difficulty remembering visual and auditory perceptions; inability to repeat back simple sequences of words or numbers.

Many of these symptoms can be observed while the child is in school or studying at home. But they may also be apparent during play and social interactions. In addition to these symptoms of intellectual functioning, learning disabled children may also display low self-esteem, behavioral problems and a lack of social skills. These are secondary characteristics of learning disorders. But they can be equally devastating to a child's emotional health.

The presence of any of these characteristics should alert program staff to the possibility of an organic learning disability. If possible, the affected child should be referred for assessment and treatment. Untrained persons should not attempt to identify a specific disorder. It is sufficient for youth workers to recognize that a problem may exist, seeking attention for those who need it.

Support for Children with Learning Disabilities

Untrained persons should not attempt to assess or treat learning disabilities. But generalist volunteers can still give their moral support and help children to feel good about themselves in spite of the disability. Family support is a crucial part of educational rehabilitation. In this respect, institutionalized children are greatly disadvantaged. But workers in a project may still be able to provide the kind of parental understanding and guidance which help children cope with the secondary characteristics of their disability.

A positive attitude on the part of teachers and guardians is an essential part of the rehabilitative process. In dealing with disabilities, the best approach is to focus on what a child is able to do, instead of on her limitations. Program staff should expect progress to occur in very small steps, and should always acknowledge or reward any accomplishment, no matter how small. They should also provide many opportunities for children to succeed at simple tasks around the house and in the learning program.

The use of labels to describe a child's condition should be avoided. Diagnostic labels may facilitate communication among professionals. They are also useful for determining treatment plans. But they don't have a place in the treatment process. In fact, adult expectations based on a label often produce a self-fulfilling prophecy. The child is treated as less capable because she has a "disability". She, in turn, behaves in the expected manner, as if she were incapable. Instead of concentrating on disabilities, program staff should focus more on what they are able to do.

Children with learning disorders should be treated as normally as possible. At times, it will be necessary to make allowances for poor behavior. Many of these children are also hyperactive, or they may not fully understand what behaviors are expected of them. But this does not mean that they should not be disciplined. Neither should they be allowed to use their disability to avoid responsibility for their actions. The staff's expectations must be tailored to each child's individual needs and abilities. When a disciplinary action seems to be called for, it is important to keep in mind that the learning disabled child has more cause to misbehave than other children. At the same time, she must be called held accountable for all her actions.

Youth promoters can best help children with learning disorders by knowing them as individuals and responding to them on the basis of who they are, rather than what they are called. Learning disabled children are just like any others in most respects. By treating them as people, instead of "disabilities", they will be better able to accept their limitations and recognize their skills, talents, and other abilities.

CHAPTER FIVE: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND WORK READINESS

Child Workers

Child labor is a common occurrence in most parts of the developing world. Many of the children attending Peace Corps supported youth programs have already had to work for a living. Often the place of employment is a city street, where young people sell food and wares, shine shoes, or perform illicit services. Other child workers remain at home, where they manage entire households or tend to family plots and livestock. Whether or not this is an acceptable state of affairs, we are not in a position to judge. These children work because they must -- either from economic necessity or by parental edict. The role of the youth promoter is to support them in their efforts to survive, and we can do that best by guarding against their exploitation, providing them with skills for a better future, and developing opportunities for safe employment.

Forced child labor is a major cause of homelessness in children. Vagrancy of children often begins with a child selling food on a public street or marketplace in order to supplement the family income. Many of them do not receive a proper education, but are schooled, instead, in a world of vice and exploitation. Girls are often enticed into prostitution or premature parenthood. Boys are drawn to easier methods of earning money, become increasingly vagrant, anti-social, and delinquent.

The problem here is not that children work. We are concerned, instead, with their working conditions and vulnerability to exploitation. Many of these children are exploited by their parents. In some families it is the children who act as the principal earners. They may be punished for failing to bring home an acceptable wage at the end of a day's work. I have even seen cases of irresponsible parents extorting earnings from children they have put out on the street. Even when abuse is not present, the working child may feel that his principal worth is as an economic resource to his parents. He may reason that he would be better off on his own, supporting only himself. And so he drifts apart from his family and gradually takes to living in the street.

Because child labor is often a family problem, it is preferable to work with a child's parents, whenever possible. Vagrancy and exploitation can be prevented by relieving the family of some of the financial burdens which necessitate its dependence on child labor. Youth promoters must also educate parents about the risks that their working children are exposed to, and advise them of their need for proper schooling, leisure time, and recreation.

Volunteers with a background in social work or family counseling may choose to work with the families of working children as a secondary project. The structure of such projects can be quite informal. It may even be possible to provide this service without the support of a sponsoring agency. Participating families can be recruited in local market places, and the work of counseling these children and their parents can occur in the same environment. If a counterpart is available to accompany the volunteer in this activity, so much the better. But I would view this type of project as a legitimate form of community development. If the project is properly conducted, the parents themselves can function as counterparts. This is especially true if groups of parents are brought together to discuss the needs and attendant risks of their children who work. I don't know if it has ever been done, but the formation of support groups for families of working children is a worthwhile project for Youth Development volunteers.

In residential and other formal programs, the emphasis is bound to be different. Many programs provide daytime support services to working children. Such programs often function as drop-in centers, where children receive nutrition and health care, moral supervision, and opportunities for recreation and education. These are primarily preventative programs, and parents are often included in many of their activities.

Residential programs have a different approach to child labor. For most of the children of live-in programs, a crisis has already occurred. The working child has separated from his or her family, and may already have progressed to vagrancy and homelessness. Preventative measures are no longer adequate.

Initially such programs exist to protect the child from further exploitation or abuse. They may also serve a rehabilitative purpose. But eventually they will have to deal with the problem of what to do with these young people once they are old enough to leave the program. An important function of all residential centers is to provide youths with employable skills and help them develop positive attitudes about work.

Many youth projects are geared towards the protective care of children, to the neglect of vocational needs. This is unfortunate. One of the worst things a program can do is to take in independent children -- house them, clothe them, feed them, and enroll them in school -- then return them to the streets as dependent young adults. Children need time for play and learning. But most of these kids have worked before. They have proved themselves capable of supporting themselves. The program which fails to recognize and develop these capacities does them a great disservice.

Youths of a live-in program ought to be encouraged to contribute towards their own care. As in any family, they should be required to perform such daily chores as cooking and cleaning. They should also contribute to the maintenance of the program -- by helping in gardens, workshops, and small income-generating projects. Program requirements for youths to contribute labor to a project instill them with a sense of communal responsibility, while fostering their personal growth and independence. Youngsters may be compensated for their work (given an allowance or token rewards). But more important is the sense of worth which each child gains from knowing he is able to contribute towards his care. Many of these children were economically self-supporting in the past. They should never again be exploited for their labor. But youth promoters can help them to discover that there is also dignity in work and self sufficiency.

Vocational Education Programs

Live-in youth centers ought to provide some kind of training program for vocational readiness (Peace Corps uses the term "Vocational Education/Job Skills Training" to describe this part of the Youth Development program; I have shortened this title to 'vocational education' or 'vocational readiness', which can be used interchangeably). This usually means teaching youths practical work skills, which will enable them to get a job. There is, however, another side to vocational education, which is often overlooked in social service agencies: the development of vocational goals and employment seeking skills, and placement assistance (to be treated in the following section).

The primary objectives of a vocational education program are:

1) to provide youths with practical work skills.
2) teach youths proper work habits (safety, punctuality, discipline, etc.).
3) impart positive attitudes about work and employment.
4) develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
5) stimulate creativity and develop personal talents.
6) provide youths with a constructive outlet for their energies.
7) prepare the young person for self-sufficiency and provide opportunities for self-advancement.
8) help youths obtain employment.

The central feature of a vocational education program are the shops or classes where youths learn the skills of a trade. In these shops, they learn to operate machinery or equipment which they might be expected to use in a real employment situation. In a carpentry shop, for instance, they might begin by learning how to use simple hand tools, then advance to power tools, until they have the skills to produce a salable product. Some centers even market the products which are made in the shops. But the emphasis of any training program should always be on education, rather than production or income generation. (Some volunteers will disagree with me on this point. I do not mean to imply that income generating projects are inappropriate for the vocational programs of youth centers. However, my experiences with such projects have taught me the importance of separating income generating activities from the educational or skills training component of the program.)

Vocational education implies more than just the transfer of practical skills. It is just as important to teach youths self-discipline and promote self esteem. Many centers with limited resources provide training in a single trade. A girls program which only offers sewing classes will not expect every girl to become a seamstress. But all children may be expected to attend the class, because it is felt that there are other benefits to be derived from this training. The young girl who has no special interest or talent for sewing may still learn valuable skills and habits in the training program. Even if she does not become a qualified seamstress, she will have learned to work in a formal environment. Hopefully, she will also have developed a personal sense of capability and productivity.

The vocational education program will be most successful if it includes a variety of training opportunities. The greater the selection of courses to choose from, the more likely that each student will discover a trade to which she is suited. If the resources are available, the center should also offer different kinds of training opportunities - not just in mechanical skills, such as carpentry, but office skills as well, such as filing, typing and bookkeeping, agricultural skills, and home economics. This way, youths have more opportunity to learn a trade which is suited to their individual talents, interests, and abilities.

In developing the training programs, several factors need to be considered. Foremost of these is appropriateness -- for the local economy, the center, and the individual. It is pointless to train youths for a trade at which they cannot expect to earn a living. Many of the centers I have visited teach carpentry to the boys and sewing to the girls. Program directors assume that these are marketable skills, because they see that many people are already employed in these trades. Instead, they should ask themselves if the local economy can support any more carpenters and seamstresses. The fact that there are already many workers employed in these fields may actually indicate that these are not marketable skills.

Prior to determining what courses it will offer, the center should investigate the local employment market. Are there more jobs available for carpenters, or mechanics and technicians? The center must also decide on the best way to teach these skills. Should students be trained in the use of power tools or manual? Sewing can be a marketable skill, depending on how it is taught. Training on manual or home electric machines is helpful for those who plan to establish a small business out of the home. But there are probably more employment opportunities in the clothing manufacture industry. Students trained on industrial machines will have a sizable advantage over those who are trained on manual machines.

The training curriculum must also suit the needs and resources of the sponsoring agency. The selection of courses for a program is usually contingent on available funding. In most urban locales, auto mechanics is a marketable skill. But the cost of equipment may be prohibitive for many centers. Carpentry tools are also expensive. But the center may be able to justify this cost by the money it saves from producing its own furniture in the workshop. In this respect, carpentry is an appropriate course offering. Also, there is usually a greater availability of carpentry instructors to teach classes, than mechanics and other tradesmen (perhaps because many of them cannot find jobs in the competitive marketplace).

The most important consideration for vocational education directors are the personal needs of students in the program. Vocational education is not just teaching job skills. It is also concerned with the young person's overall development. Giving a child a reason to feel good about herself is just as important as teaching her a marketable skill. The vocational education program should therefore be designed with both practical and personal needs in mind.

Vocational instructors should concentrate on teaching basic skills which children and youths are capable of learning. At the beginning of a course, shop assignments should be simple and relatively easy to succeed at. They should also be fun to perform and result in objects which are useful to the student (for example, the construction of simple toys and games, made of wood). As students become more advanced, the instructor may begin to emphasize productivity, functionality and quality of work. But at the start, students should be evaluated on the basis of attitude and effort, rather than the results of their efforts.

During all phases of vocational training, there must be attention to personal safety and maintenance of equipment. Students must be trained in the proper use of tools. Good work habits should also be encouraged. This includes punctuality, cleanliness and orderly behavior. Good conduct is essential in shop settings. Instructors should remove a misbehaving child from the shop rather than deal with behavioral problems in this setting.

Young people also need time for play and school. A center should not overemphasize the training component of its program. Most adolescents are still unsure of what they want to do in life. It does little good to tell them that their future depends on the skills that they learn while attending the program. At this stage of their lives, they will not be much concerned with the learning of a lifetime occupation. The vocational program exists, instead, to teach them some very basic skills, good work habits, and confidence in their productive abilities.

Vocational Counseling

Many centers with programs in vocational education tend to overlook the importance of supportive services such as career counseling and job placement assistance. The focus of these programs is on the learning of job skills. But it often happens that youths receive these skills, with no indication of how they can be used for finding a job.

At the Centro San Juan Bosco, we found that vocational counseling and placement assistance were just as important as job skills training for enabling youths to obtain employment. In fact, young people who received these supportive services, but lacked skills, were probably more likely to find a job than those who received vocational training, without the supports. The reason for this difference is that in an economy like that of Honduras, it is harder to find a job than it is to perform one. Rudimentary job skills learned in the center are no substitute for work experience. Real work skills are usually learned on-the-job, and for that to happen, you must first place the young person _in_ the job. It is probably also true that in many countries of the developing world, personal influence with an employer counts for more than skills and work experience. Youth centers should therefore strive to develop personal relationships with the local employers of an area.

Skills training is an integral part of young people's vocational preparation. But the youths of a center will also need assistance in determining their occupational interests, identifying their abilities, and clarifying their vocational goals. Furthermore, the youth center should assume responsibility for helping place older youths in employment situations. Of the various elements of vocational preparation discussed in this chapter, it is this step in the process -- the job search -- which presents the greatest difficulties and challenges to the disadvantaged youths of a center. This aspect of work readiness is treated in the following sections.

Support From the Business Community

Despite massive unemployment in local economies, many businesses in the developing world have a hard time recruiting qualified workers. Youth centers with advanced vocational programs may constitute a valuable source of labor for these companies. Under these conditions, it may be possible for a center to establish an agreement with local employers: either to provide materials for training programs, or employ youths in a work-study arrangement.

American companies, operating within the country, can also be approached with requests for assistance. Volunteers may be able to obtain donations of used equipment from some of the major employers in the area. From a company's point of view, this is more than good public relations -- it is good business, since it may very well lead to the development of a qualified labor pool.

Work-Study and Social Service

Young people are at a disadvantage when seeking employment, due to their lack of formal work experience. A youth center can improve their prospects for employment by establishing a work-study program in collaboration with local employers. Under such a program, local businesses would agree to hire these youths on a temporary basis. They could work at the business for a three-month trial period. Their wages might be lower than the prevailing rate of pay, but in return they receive on-the-job training, work experience, a letter of recommendation and the possibility of future employment with the company.

As an added incentive to the employer, the center could offer them the services of a job coach, who would work with youths on the job site. This practice is currently used with disabled persons in the United States. The job coach accompanies workers on the job, assists with their training, and lends a hand wherever needed. This is an attractive arrangement for employers who worry about the expense of retraining a new employee every three months.

Work-study experiences can be preceded by a series of social service assignments, which prepare youths to enter the formal work environment. Youths of a center might first be required to perform a voluntary service within the center (i.e., kitchen assistant or office helper). At this stage, their work is monitored by program personnel and is corrected, if necessary. For their second assignment, they would perform a similar service in the community: for a civic organization, hospital, school or orphanage. This allows them to get away from the center for a period of time during the day, promoting greater independence and freedom of movement. The final stage would be work-study, with opportunities to earn some extra income and possibly obtain permanent employment. In this phase of the program youths are expected to do a job, like any other paid employee. They work with a supervisor, are required to be present during regular working hours, and fully comply with company regulations.

In 1983, the Centro San Juan Bosco initiated its own social service/work-study program, in collaboration with the pediatric wing of a local hospital. This program was good for the Centro's public image and a valuable experience for the youths who participated. Many of them came away from it with a heightened sense of social responsibility. Although their own lives had not been easy, many of them did not realize how fortunate they were to be living at the Centro, when compared to the children they encountered in the hospital: the malnourished, the dying, and the severely abused. Doing volunteer work was an eye-opening experience for all of these kids. They were proud to be of service to other, less fortunate children, and were more appreciative of the advantages they enjoyed from living at the center.

In the final phase of work-study, youths partake of an actual working experience. Even if this does not result in permanent employment with the sponsoring business, there are many benefits to be gained from this experience. This is an important first step towards establishing an employment history. It will also give them a realistic view of the working world, the demands of a paying job, and the expectations of future employers.

Payment For Work

Adolescents should have money for their personal needs and entertainment. If they cannot acquire it by legitimate means, they may resort to begging or stealing. If possible, the center should provide them with opportunities to earn some extra money: an allowance, work-study assignment, or share of the profits from income generating projects.

Many centers pay their children for the salable items they produce in the workshops. The problem with this is that younger children do not benefit as much as adolescents, whose skills are more developed. Of course, adolescents need more money. But in the eyes of the younger children (many of whom are already accustomed to earning money), this arrangement may seem unfair and is liable to create discontent and negative feelings. My experience from the Centro San Juan Bosco is that when children are paid unequally for the work they perform, all but the highest earners become resentful and cease to cooperate with the staff of the center.

Most programs require residents to perform daily chores around the center. Children are more likely to cooperate when they receive a weekly allowance. An allowance (consisting of either real or token money), is a tangible form of positive reinforcement. It can be based on behavior and scholastic achievement, as well as the regular performance of household chores. But these systems tend to be complicated, and also lead to disparities of income. After much experimentation at the Centro San Juan Bosco, we found that the most effective method of distribution was to scale allowances according to age and length of time in the program. We gave the children money because we felt they needed it, not as a tool of behavior modification. However, when some children severely misbehaved, we did have recourse to withhold their allowance.

Allowances can be paid through a project bank, administered by the youths of a center. Young people should be encouraged to save a part of their money. At the Centro San Juan Bosco half of the allowance was deposited in trust, and the other half was placed in an unrestricted account. When youths left the program at age eighteen, they were given the money placed in savings. This money (as much as $150 US), was useful in helping them get established in their life outside the program.

Centers which operate advanced vocational training programs often try to market the items produced in the shops. The idea of establishing cottage industries within a center may present more problems than it resolves. My opinion is that such ventures are inappropriate for residential programs, because it creates too much conflict for the institution to double in the role of employer and caretaker. However, many centers do this anyway, believing that this is the best way of providing youths with the money they need.

Centers which endeavor to provide this service had better be certain that the youths are capable of meeting competitive production standards, and that a market exists for their product. Youth-operated cottage industries usually fail on these two points. Workshop businesses may not be able to show a profit without financial contributions from the center or other outside institutions. But even if there are no profits, the center must be prepared to pay youths for their work, so they do not feel exploited.

My experience is that youth center industries do not succeed in a competitive marketplace. This is because the organizers lack knowledge of business administration, and because the work of these youths is generally not up to professional standards. Such projects are economically feasible only if the workers are paid a substandard wage. Sooner or later they are bound to discover that they are underpaid. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, this realization resulted in several work stoppages. Payment of any kind for work rendered in the shops often leads to conflict. Different pay scales engender resentment; and once the youths of a center get it into their heads that the institution is profiting from their labors (even if it isn't), the entire system begins to unravel.

Junior Achievement

Some centers include the teaching of basic entrepreneurial skills in their vocational education programs. The **Junior Achievement** model, developed in the United States, provides an excellent framework for such a program.

The main objective of a Junior Achievement-type project is not income generation. Its real purpose is to teach some basic concepts of business and entrepreneurship. If a J.A. venture also happens to put some extra money in the students' pockets, so much the better. But the real value of this experience lies in the lessons it teaches about what makes a business succeed or fail.

The vocational programs of many centers emphasize production, to the neglect of entrepreneurial and marketing skills. Youths are taught to make furniture and other items, yet never learn the skills they will need to market these products. This is because it is generally easier to make a product than it is to sell one. Junior Achievement projects address this inadequacy by focusing on the overall management of a business, not just the production side.

The Junior Achievement model of the student owned and operated 'mini-corporation' is a hands-on learning experience in business development and administration. With the help of an adult advisor -- usually a member of the business community -- young entrepreneurs launch their own business venture and learn some basic concepts of business management. The business advisor teaches them simplified methods for accounting, cost analysis, and market research. But the raising of capital, selection of a product, and management of the J.A. business, are all performed by the youths themselves. Since the purpose of the project is educational rather than lucrative, they should be allowed to make their own decisions, even if this results in mistakes which lead to the failure of the venture. Young entrepreneurs need to understand the reasons why businesses fail. Sometimes this is best accomplished by letting them experience that failure.

Of course, J.A. ventures should always be encouraged to succeed. But the success of the experience cannot be judged by profits alone. Youths should be encouraged to participate in Junior Achievement-type projects, not only for the money they will make, but also for the learning experience. Junior Achievement Inc. has developed excellent learning materials to help youths understand the basic principles of business administration. Their workbooks and forms are valuable resources for any youth center involved in the production and marketing of products made by youths. These materials are written in English. But they are greatly simplified and most suitable for youths of any culture.

Income-Generating Projects

Many youth centers have attempted to establish small businesses, designed to help the youths of a program become economically self-supporting. 'Micro-enterprises' of this sort were a common feature of many of the programs I visited in Honduras. A center would set up a woodworking shop, where the youths would be taught carpentry skills. Once the equipment was in place and students had acquired some basic skills, it was natural to think about selling the articles produced in the shop. This would seem to be a good way of putting newly developed skills to practical use. It would also help students become self-sufficient.

Many of the micro-enterprises I observed in Honduras were successful at gaining some modest income for the youths who participated. At the same time, they were a financial drain on the institutions, which usually had to subsidize these ventures -- with contributions of either personnel or raw materials, as well as all the equipment. In the long-run, few of these projects were profitable to the centers which put so much effort into their development.

I have already discussed the reasons for why vocational programs should concentrate on education rather than production. But this does not mean that income-generating activities are inappropriate for the youth center. Some programs have been able to supplement their income with profits earned from small businesses and cottage industries. Such ventures, if properly administered, can greatly contribute to the financial development of vocational education programs and other important youth services.

The fundamental goal of any income-generating activity is to generate income for the institution. This seems too obvious to state, but it is truly remarkable how many youth centers ignore this important principle of business administration. In order for such projects to be successful, they must be separate from the center's vocational education program. The purpose of the venture is to generate profits; it has nothing to do with teaching skills or providing employment opportunities.

Program directors, teachers and social workers must not interfere with the operation of the business. The venture should have a business manager, who is adequately paid and at liberty to make all manner of management decisions. This includes personnel policy. Consequently, skilled workers may receive hiring preference over the youths of a center. It may be argued that the graduates of the vocational program should have opportunities to work in program-sponsored enterprises. But they must qualify for the job on the basis of their abilities, instead of their status with the center. It is a poor business practice to hire youths on a preferential basis, and a center has too much at stake to risk a financial failure, merely for the sake of employing these youths.

After much experimentation with small classroom-centered enterprises, the Centro San Juan Bosco finally ended this practice in favor of developing full-scale business ventures, operated independently of the social program. A construction supply company, hardware store and furniture factory were eventually established, the profits from which supported the program. This arrangement made the Centro less dependent on foreign charities. It gave the program more visibility and standing in the community, and allowed it to expand its social services to a great extent. Subsequently, the program became involved in other areas of social development, such as cooperative housing and agriculture, nutritional programs, and women's cooperatives.

Income generating activities can share facilities with vocational training programs. Graduates of the program may be encouraged to seek employment in the program-sponsored businesses. But this should not happen as an automatic extension of the vocational training process. The business ventures of the Centro San Juan Bosco employed very few of the youths who attended the program. When employment problems occurred with some of them, they were handled by the business managers, not the staff of the social program. This arrangement seems essential to the success of the enterprise.

On the whole, it may be a bad idea to employ youths within the center. Children who have spent a large portion of their lives in an institution regard the institution as a provider and protector. They may feel they have a right to be employed there. But they may be so accustomed to receiving this support and protection, that these expectations continue into adulthood. They may also expect to be given more slack than other employees, reasoning that, 'these are my parents, they have to forgive me.'

Graduate youths should be employed at the center, only if they have proven their ability to do the job. Otherwise, they should seek employment outside of the project, where they are likely to feel more independent and develop better work habits.

CHAPTER SIX: RECREATION IN YOUTH CENTERS

Children and Play

The provision of recreational services to children is a principal concern of youth centers. It is obvious that children need to play -- for their personal growth and gratification. Most centers attempt to satisfy this need with organized recreation programs. But such programs are often established without a very clear understanding of the meaning of recreation, or its objectives.

In Western culture, play is often confused with freedom. Recreation is thought to be something people do in their "free" time. Because our culture values freedom, we also tend to idealize play -- especially in children. We see play as a type of activity which is tied to emotional drives, such as pleasure or aggression. But developmental psychologists are now discovering that play is often anything but free activity, and that its basis is cognitive as well as emotional.

Jerome Kagan, in his book **Unstable Ideas**, illustrates this concept with the example of a one-year-old, attempting to build a tower of blocks. He begins to stack the blocks in a single pile. He may fail at this task several times and still persist with the original objective of building his tower. Why? Because the ideal -- the **standard** for such a tower -- already exists in his mind. It is the nature of the child to attempt to match this standard in reality.

Is this block-building activity a form of play? To the casual observer it looks like play. But for the child, it is probably closer to what we consider work. To accomplish this task he must summon several newly-developed cognitive and motor skills: eye-hand coordination, balance, and ordering of objects, to name but a few. His initial failures will likely provoke anxiety, uncertainty, and even shame, none of which are pleasant emotions. Kagan even argues that the ideal of the tower is a moral standard; it is the standard for what all block towers should be.

I have cited this example here because it nicely illustrates all of the various components of that activity which we call play -- the physical, moral, emotional, and cognitive elements of recreation. It also shows that play is not a frivolous activity. In younger children, it is an essential part of their physical and mental development. In older children, it promotes emotional, moral, and social growth as well. Recreation and leisure skills are necessary for healthy development, and the directors of recreation programs should have some knowledge of these concepts.

Program Development for Social Recreation

To a large extent, the success of any center depends on the contentment and happiness of the children it serves. Street kids, especially, are accustomed to leading independent and often exciting lifestyles. For entertainment, they may vandalize property, abuse drugs, engage in violence and indiscriminate sexual activity. Many of these behaviors result from poor self-esteem and the normal anxieties of adolescence. Others are prompted by environmental factors, such as social deprivation, lack of supervision, and excess leisure time. From a social services perspective, such behaviors constitute a threat to both society and the individual. But from the delinquent child's point of view, they are also forms of play -- **negative play** -- which provide entertainment and release of tensions.

Youths centers aim to change these negative behaviors. But in so doing, they also do away with some principal forms of recreation. Destructive leisure activities must be replaced by other forms of entertainment. The success of a program will therefore depend greatly on the quality of recreational services it provides.

For our purposes, recreation may be defined as goal-oriented behavior, which is directed towards the satisfaction of personal needs for pleasure and release of tension. It is a form of activity, which is usually performed during leisure time. It may not be explicitly productive; but the kind of recreation I am speaking of now has positive results for the individual and society. It is a positive form of personal expression. It enriches one's personality, promotes growth in the individual, and contributes to the life of the community. Some important goals for the social recreation program of any youth center are:

1) enrichment of life for all persons.
2) facilitate the adjustment of youths to the program setting.
3) improve the quality of life in the institution.
4) reduce destructive or harmful use of leisure time.
5) release of tension, hostility and aggression.
6) contribute to the cultural development of individuals.
7) promote the development of interpersonal relationships.
8) promote the development of personal and social skills.
9) help youths define their leisure interests.
10) reduce tensions and conflicts within the center.

Social recreation should be high on the agenda of any program serving youths -- especially residential programs. Children will not comply with the rules of a program, or cooperate with its staff, unless they are content to be there. A big complaint of street kids entering a program for the first time is that their freedom is restricted and that they are always bored. An effective recreation program will attract children into the project and help them to adjust to a new way of life. It will also offer more opportunities for fun and entertainment than what is available on the street. Youth centers which make this a priority find that their children are more cooperative and happier, too.

Recreational programs make a project more livable, and life more enjoyable. They primarily exist for children to have fun. But there is also a serious, instructional side to recreation. Social recreation programs complement other programs in formal education and vocational preparation. They do this by contributing to youths' personal development -- physical, mental, moral, and social. With effective planning, a social recreation program can be built to enrich a child's whole personality.

Activities should be planned with several things in mind: promotion of leadership qualities, safety, accessibility to all children, fairness, development of personal interests, instructiveness, and reintegration of children in the life of the community. Programs should provide a mix of structured activities, organized sports, individual leisure pursuits, and group play. They should focus on activities at which all children may participate and share the fun, although it may occasionally be necessary to separate groups by age and sex.

One very important aspect of recreation programs is that they allow children and staff to have fun together. Program personnel are often cast in the role of disciplinarians. As such, they are often resented and even mistreated. Mutual participation in recreational activities helps children see staff in a different light. Shared enjoyment leads to better understanding on both sides, easing the tensions that exist between children and staff. This makes for greater job satisfaction and maximizes staff effectiveness.

As a volunteer at the Centro San Juan Bosco, some of my most satisfying experiences came of playing with the children in my leisure time. This kind of play was an important outlet for some of the pressures and frustrations in my own life. I was also able to pursue many of my own leisure interests (fishkeeping, swimming, reading, and exploring), as a regular part of my job. This made for rewarding experiences -- for both myself and the children of the project. I was a happier person for having had these opportunities, and was closer to the children as a result.

Physical Education

It is important that the social recreation program addresses all aspects of children's development. This includes her physical development, as well as the mental and moral. Recreation programs should have a strong emphasis on sports and physical activity. Not only do such activities build a child's body and physical endurance; they also contribute to her moral development, social growth, and self-esteem.

Organized sports have existed since the beginning of organized culture. Modern sports, such as baseball and soccer, are thought to be representations of mock struggles between hostile tribes. In some ancient civilizations, the struggles were real -- often to the death. But today, the dangers are mostly artificial and the stakes not nearly as high. For this reason, sports and other physical contests provide a safe, socially acceptable outlet for feelings of aggression.

Sporting contests generally promote competition between young people. This is not necessarily a bad thing; it really depends on the context. Human beings may be competitive by nature, so perhaps it is better that we act out our aggressions on a playing field, instead of in the social or professional arenas. Competition spurs many people to achieve. It may also promote personal growth and enhance self-esteem (as long as players feel that they are achieving according to their own standards, rather than merely winning or losing).

Organized sports satisfy the young person's urge to compete... and competition is a fact of youth. Sporting events also provide a physical outlet for tension and anxiety. As a result, some aggression may be present on the playing field. If not properly supervised, it can turn vicious, perhaps even dangerous. But with good coaching, sports activities teach youths to direct aggression and pent-up energy towards the achievement of positive goals, such as self-improvement and group cohesiveness. The advantage for the youth center is that children will be generally less hostile or destructive if provided with such positive releases.

Team sports can be especially good for promoting social values. As members of the team, young people may learn the fundamentals of leadership, cooperation, fair play, responsibility, and allegiance to the group. At the same time, it is important to encourage personal achievement -- competition within the self to meet one's own personal standards, exceed limitations, and expand capabilities.

The program in social recreation should present youths with physical challenges. This can be done through organized sports or other contests of physical ability. But it is equally important to provide youths with non-competitive challenges to grow. The program should therefore include opportunities for outdoor recreation, such as hiking, camping, swimming, and exploring. It is also desirable to utilize equipment and resources which challenge youths to meet internal standards of physical fitness. Gymnasiums, rope and obstacle courses, and weight rooms serve this purpose.

Whatever the activity, every child should have an opportunity to participate and excel. Sports programs may help children who are poor achievers in social or scholastic settings feel good about themselves, if they are able to excel on the playing field. On the other hand, children who are poor athletes may feel inadequate if made to participate in competitive activities. Programs should create opportunities for both types of children to feel good about their bodies and physical abilities.

It is also important to remember that one of the main objectives of physical recreation is the promotion of fun. It is therefore important that children not be coerced into participating. Recreational programs partially exist to promote the autonomy of the individual -- not to enforce obedience or submission. Mandatory sports and contests are not much fun; they defeat the purpose of recreation. Children should be encouraged to participate; they should be helped to participate. But they should never be forced to participate.

Initiative Games

Initiative games are activities, both physical and mental, which are designed to promote the development of problem-solving skills, leadership, cooperation, trust, and group cohesiveness. The game is structured in terms of a communal problem, which may only be solved by working together as a group.

A good example of a physically challenging initiative game is the 'chain walk'. This activity requires that two lengths of 6 x 4 lumber be prepared by drilling holes through the wood at 14-inch intervals. The holes are then threaded with 4-to-5-foot lengths of rope, knotted at one end. The boards are placed flat on the ground and each player stands on the wood, between the intervals of rope. They grasp the rope-ends in their hands and attempt as a group to move forward, lifting the ropes to move the boards. In order to accomplish this task, the players must think and act in unison. This game teaches group cohesiveness and cooperation. A similar activity involves tying a large group of people together with a length of rope and having them walk towards an established goal.

Other types of initiative games present the group with a social problem. For instance, it is supposed that the earth is about to be destroyed. A rocket ship exists which can transfer only eight people to another planet, where they

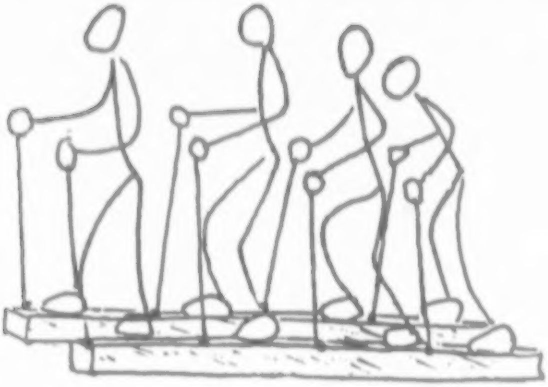


Figure 2. The 'Chain Walk'

will establish a new civilization. However, there are fifteen players, each assigned a different role, such as doctor, housewife, stock broker, and bum. The group must decide who will stay and who will live. The problem may be complicated by assigning players particular characteristics, such as age, race, health condition, or physical handicap.

These activities are usually designed to encourage group bonding and interreliance. Players are presented with problems too great to be solved by any individual. Problems like the one above also cause people to look at and question social structures while enabling them to practice skills in fairness and group consensus. Other types of activities can be designed to create group trust or leadership skills. In a 'trust walk', an individual is blindfolded for a period of time and must rely on a group of persons to guide him through an obstacle course.

The New Games Foundation is an organization which is dedicated to the promotion of initiative games and other non-threatening play activities. This foundation has published several books, which may serve as valuable resources for youth workers in recreation. The New Games philosophy holds that play should strengthen the life of the community and enhance the personal development of all individuals. New Games typically involve strong elements of fantasy and ritual. They create an atmosphere of trust and freedom within the group, and are aimed at changing people's attitudes about competition, power, safety, leadership, risk, limitations, and creativity.

Within the youth center, it may be possible to organize a New Games tournament, using some of the activities from the books. These games are well suited for social services programs assisting youths. However, it is part of the New Games concept that activities be structured according to the needs and desires of all persons. Rules for the games are not inflexible; they should always be adapted to the talents, interests, and abilities of the group.

Leisure Skills

The term 'leisure skills' describes the ability to make constructive use of leisure time. One function of a social recreation program is to help youths define their leisure interests and develop them accordingly. Past leisure interests may include negative or destructive behaviors. Youth centers will want to replace these habits with positive interests. Recreation programs should therefore provide them with many opportunities to develop new interests and forms of entertainment. Youths should be supported in their hobbies, some of which may eventually lead to employment opportunities or life pursuits.

It is also important to provide a stimulating environment for the development of new interests. This can be done through the organization of science and nature clubs, explorers groups, and classes in music or arts & crafts. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, I was able to practice one of my own hobbies by establishing a small aquarium in the resource center. This project had much appeal for many youths of the project. We made our own nets in the sewing shop and often went on fish collecting expeditions in a nearby river. Volunteers who are fortunate enough to live in Central America, Thailand, the Amazon region or near Lakes Malawi and Tanganyika, will discover a wide selection of beautiful tropical fish for stocking their aquaria.

Recreational Resources

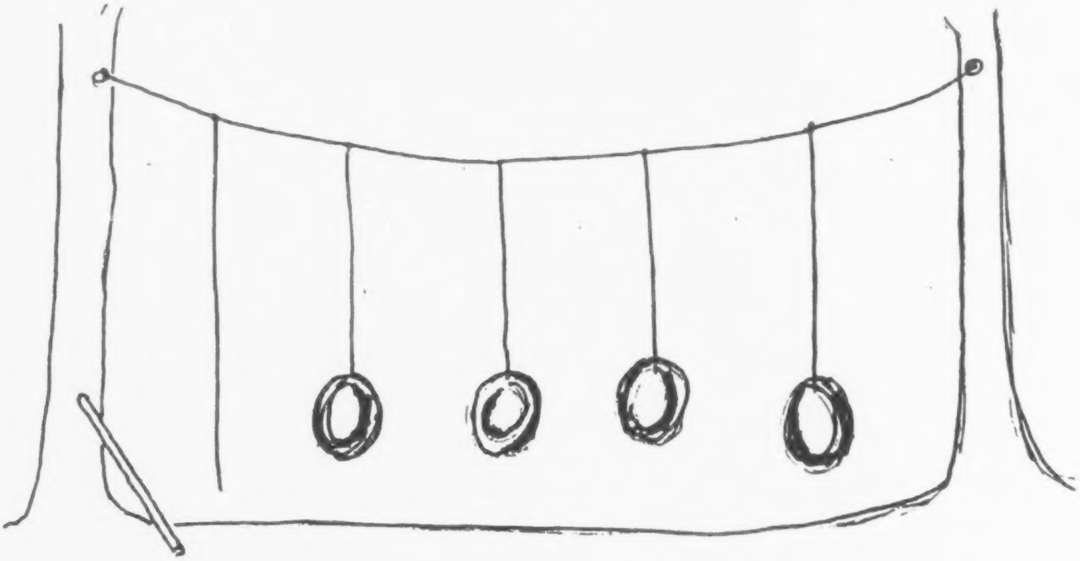
The most important resource of any recreational program are the project staff who give it direction. Programs can get by on minimal budgets, but fun cannot be purchased at any price. Many poor children of the developing world are experts at improvising cost-free games and entertainment. Leisure skills theory hold that more often than not improvised games are usually more appreciated than those that involve much expense.

Salaries of staff, however, do cost money. Existing program staff may not have the time to organize a program in social recreation. Yet, it may be possible to rely on volunteers from the community. In many countries, high school students are required to perform a social service project prior to graduation. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, friends of the program and children of our staff volunteered their time to our recreation program. In this way, we were able to arrange for free classes in music, art, dance, and martial arts.

Youth centers should also should also use recreational facilities in the community (playgrounds, beaches, playing fields and parks). This can result in a savings to the program, and is also beneficial to the youths of the project. The importance of conducting activities outside of the center has already been discussed in Chapter Three, "Institutionalization And Its Effects". Programs should take advantage of community resources to provide youths with a varied, non-institutional setting for their outdoor leisure pursuits.

It is also possible to construct equipment and other resources within the project. Many items can be made in a center's vocational shops. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, we equipped an entire weight room with made objects, at practically no cost to the program. Benches, stands and balance boards were constructed in the carpentry shop. For weights, we cemented metal bars to discarded tire rims. We made a punching bag from a fiber sack (the type used for transporting grain), and for gloves, the boys used a double layer of socks on their hands. This area was very popular with the boys of the project, and they valued it because they had made it themselves.

Programs with limited financial resources may have difficulty establishing a decent recreation program, due to the high cost of equipment. Some programs also have a low priority for recreation, because they don't understand its importance for youth development. But imagination and initiative make excellent replacements for material resources. Also, programs which make recreation a priority will find that the quality of life within the center is greatly improved.



CHAPTER SEVEN: SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR YOUTH PROMOTERS

Youth work can involve many different areas of social development, including health, education, business development, and vocational preparation. Peace Corps youth promoters usually concentrate on one or two of these areas during the course of their service. In this chapter I describe some of the projects I developed with the Centro San Juan Bosco.

Gardens and Small Animal Projects

Gardening and small animal projects are appropriate activities for almost all types of youth centers. Even in cities, where land is at a premium, vegetables and flowers can be grown in wooden beds, on rooftops, and in courtyards. Animals may be harder to raise in an urban environment. Children should not have to live in close quarters with chickens and pigs. But many centers have sufficient space to raise rabbits, bees, and other small domestic animals.

Gardening is an excellent occupational activity for school-age children. It is safe, easy to learn, and relatively inexpensive. It is a group activity, which many children enjoy -- being outdoors, caring for plants and watching them grow, harvesting the fruits of their labor. In areas where a variety of fresh produce is not available, a garden may also constitute an important food source for the center. It may even be a source of income for the program.

Tropical climates afford a year-round growing season. They also produce intense heat, which makes drudgery out of garden work if not performed at the proper time of day. This activity is best conducted in the early morning or late afternoon. Gardening should be done as a communal activity. But it can also be made more attractive by providing youths with mini-plots of land, to cultivate individually. Produce from these plots can be sold at market or to the project commissary.

Communal gardening can also be a learning experience. It sensitizes children to the world of nature and teaches them skills of self-reliance. Hands-on lessons in biology, conservation, and proper nutrition can be conducted in the garden, while they are working. The practical side of gardening is equally important. This can be a valuable skill for youths who are about to leave the protection of the center. Young persons out of work, or with diminished earning power, can always fall back on horticultural skills to satisfy their basic nutritional needs. Gardening can also be a source of secondary income for persons who are steadily employed.

In addition to the practical benefits of a gardening program, horticulture projects may also serve as an aesthetic improvement to the grounds of a center. The project site can be made more attractive by blending vegetables, fruit trees, and flower beds -- and perhaps an orchidarium or ornamental fish pond -- in a landscaped arrangement. Such improvements will make a center appear less institutional, more livable for growing children.

Animal projects can also be conducted in most centers. Raising of livestock requires considerable effort and investment of capital, as well as technical expertise. However, generalist volunteers will find it relatively easy to implement small beekeeping or rabbit-raising projects. Children at the Centro San Juan Bosco enjoyed these projects very much, though they don't have the heart to slaughter the rabbits they had raised. Fish culture may also be appropriate for some centers. But again, this requires technical expertise. Peace Corps has a lot of resources for these type projects; volunteers in Youth Development may be able to enlist the support of other volunteers for all these initiatives.

'Empowerment': Youth Council Governments and Self-Determination

'Empowerment' in social services is the practice of investing individuals with control -- control of their lives (which includes accountability for their actions), and control of the institutions whose purpose is to serve them. In youth centers, empowerment means involving youths in the decision-making processes of the program and allowing them some degree of self determination. The empowerment process also encourages them to take responsibility for their actions.

Many centers reject the concept of empowerment because it threatens the authority of the institution and its staff. Youth center personnel may believe that these kids need to be controlled. They may view their behaviors on the street and in the program as resulting from a lack of self-control. In this view it is the duty of the institution to provide the control they lack as individuals. The concept of empowerment challenges these beliefs. Applied to children, the concept holds that:

1) most children above the age of seven have fairly developed standards of right and wrong.
2) violation of these standards produces discomfort and unpleasant feelings, such as guilt.
3) most children would change their negative behaviors, if they knew how, in order to avoid this discomfort.
4) many children (particularly those who have been

abandoned, or otherwise rejected by a society), will not be bullied into conforming to adult expectations; societal standards for acceptable behavior and adult expectations must be accepted from within.

5) attempts to control the individual often reinforce the maladaptive pattern, as the child struggles to maintain a sense of self.
6) in many instances, a child will have more insight into his situation and behavior than an adult professional.
7) most children are capable of setting appropriate goals and standards for their personal growth and development.
8) children are often capable of specifying the kinds of services they require or desire.
9) as primary consumers of these services, children should have an opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness and make recommendations for their improvement or modification.
10) independent children (such as those who have lived in the street), will not submit to the authority of adults unless they believe it is ultimately to their advantage.

There is a subtle difference between changing a child's behavior and helping him to change it for himself. Peace Corps volunteers will appreciate this important distinction. The Peace Corps orientation of volunteers as "agents of change" is largely based on a theory of empowerment. In practical application, this theory holds that youth centers should exist for the legitimate benefit and interest of the children who reside there, and that they should gear their services to the stated needs of these children. These objectives can be upheld only if, 1) the youths of a center are consulted on matters concerning the provision of services, and 2) they are made to feel that they are the principal actors in the process of personal change.

Youth centers can empower young people in two ways: by establishing a youth council form of government within the project, or by including youths in some administrative aspects of the program. The development of a self-governing youth council requires a great deal of effort. At the Centro San Juan Bosco, we tried to establish a democracy of sorts, with elected officials representing the body of youths who lived in the project. We had hoped that this form of representation would encourage youths to voice their opinions on issues and policies affecting their lives. We also desired that the governing board might get involved in some of the operational functions of the center, such as menu planning, recreational planning, and scheduling of daily activities. These expectations were unrealistic. Youths of the project greatly enjoyed the election process, but the concept of self-government was foreign to them. They lacked a clear idea of their responsibilities as elected representatives of the center, could not agree on a common agenda, and were generally unmotivated to assume an administrative role within the program.

The problem with this form of self-government is that it places too much responsibility on the elected leaders of a group, without any clearly discernable benefits. Democracy is also an alien concept to the young people of many cultures. It may not be possible to convince the youths of a program that they should have a say in the policies or operations of the institution.

Though it may be unfeasible to establish a formal, democratic government within the center, it is still possible to encourage some degree of self-determination. This is best done in an informal way: asking youths for their opinions about the center, including them in program meetings, consulting them about changes of policy, requesting that they help plan activities and events of special interest.

Program personnel can promote the empowerment of youths by adopting the following strategies:

1) consult youths, individually or as a group, on program policy changes; ask their opinion: is such-and-such a rule acceptable? can it be adjusted to better suit their needs? what can the institution do to ensure better compliance with the rules? how will a policy change affect the quality of life within the center?
2) invite selected youths to attend staff meetings of particular relevance; ask that they contribute to the meeting.
3) hold monthly house meetings to inform youths of new developments in the center and discuss issues of importance to the group; provide them with a forum for voicing their opinions, ideas, and concerns.
4) consult children individually about any changes in their schedule, housing arrangements, service plans, and household duties.
5) consult with youths on the planning of their education -- formal and vocational.
6) form committees for planning social events, recreational activities, menu changes, and other operations within the center.
7) assign interested youths to special tasks within the program: librarian's helper, bank manager, office assistant, tour guide.
8) involve youths in the recruitment process (i.e., pulling other street kids into the program).
9) involve them in fund-raising activities.

The concept of empowerment implies a special kind of equality between the staff of a program and the children it serves. This is not an equality of ability, knowledge, or authority; it is an equality of kind, not of degree, and it is based on a belief in the common dignity and worth of all persons, no matter their age. It is also based on a faith in the ability of human beings to know what is right and to consciously act for the common good.

One must be careful as to how the idea of empowerment is presented to the staff of a center. Many personnel will resist such a concept, because they fear that it will undermine their authority. They may also be skeptical of its value. Volunteers can allay these fears by demonstrating the practical benefits of this movement. The concept of empowerment also applies to counterparts. This means that the staff of a center must be willingly involved in this process of empowerment.

The key to empowerment lies in listening to what children have to say about their lives, and trusting them to know what is best for themselves. This skill does not come easily to adults. At times, our trust in children is grossly unfounded. Empowerment, then, is often a matter of trusting them to recover from their mistakes. Such trust is often paid for with frustration, regret, and disappointment. At the same time, it is important to encourage growth and responsibility in the individual.

Libraries

Libraries serve several purposes within a center. A well developed children's library (also called a 'resource' or 'learning' center), will be used and enjoyed by all the members of a program, including its staff. The traditional notion of the library as a repository for books and place of study is being replaced by the broader concept of a cultural center. Modern libraries contain a variety of resources -- not just written materials -- which exist for the amusement and entertainment, as well as the edification, of their patrons. A good library is user friendly. Its materials are easily accessible, and the environment is one which is conducive to recreation and relaxation, as well as learning and cultural development.

The design of the youth center library can be as simple as a bookshelf located in the corner of a classroom, or as elaborate as a modern public facility, complete with catalog, stacks, and lending system. Material resources in and of themselves are not as important as how they are used. A more important function of the resource center is the sponsoring of activities of cultural, recreational, or educational importance. Reading programs, social functions, cultural events, study halls, and science clubs can all be conducted through the library program. The wider the offering of these and other such activities, the more effective the facility.

The main objectives for a children's resource center are:

1) to promote reading and learning in general.
2) expose children to the products, forms, and ideas of their culture.
3) complement educational and scholastic programs in the center and in school.
4) provide children with means of entertainment, a place to relax and enjoy themselves.
5) create an environment suitable for study, as well as relaxation.
6) serve as a setting for cultural and social events.
7) provide the staff of a center with reference materials relevant to their work; provide children with materials relevant to their studies.
8) function as a storage place for learning and other kinds of resources.

The center's ability to realize these objectives will largely depend on the staffing of the resource center. A good librarian can make do with limited materials. It is true that the content of a collection is also important. But a library, no matter how complete, serves no valid purpose if the books in its collection are never read. The librarian must attend to the proper filing and care of materials. Nonetheless, his principal duty is to promote their use, not their protection. In many of the programs I visited, I was saddened to see libraries kept under lock and key... dust covered books enclosed in padlocked, protective cases. In my mind, this kind of protectiveness defeats the purpose of a learning center. Books are only objects, not to be revered or closely guarded. If we are to promote their use among the young, we must accept the fact that they will be physically mishandled and maybe removed from their proper place. Instead of worrying about the inevitable deterioration of books in a collection, educators should take this as a sign of success of the reading program. After all, books become worn only through heavy usage.

The selection of materials is another important aspect in the development of a resource center. Atlases, encyclopedias, and dictionaries are useful tools for helping students with their studies. Manuals and practical handbooks can be an important complement to a center's vocational programs. But when it comes to stimulating reading interest, adult educators must give in to children's tastes.

Young children enjoy large, profusely illustrated story books about talking animals, magical beings, and fantastic adventures. Colorful images are just as important as story content for capturing a child's interest. These books should first be read aloud, then left out for children to browse. Even if a child cannot understand the words in a book, she will be entertained by the pictures, and this will accustom her to think of them as a source of entertainment.

Stimulating older, literate children to read for pleasure is a different matter, and one at which many educators often fail. Young readers are not initially excited by the 'classics' of juvenile fiction. What does excite them are stories of violence, sex, crime, war, the occult, and just about everything else that educated readers tend to disparage. But if the objective of a library is to encourage reading for its own sake, then adults must make some concessions to youngsters' preferences. It does not matter a great deal if some of the books in a collection seem a bit trashy, as long as they are not blatantly offensive or corruptive. Of course, beliefs concerning what is offensive are culture relative, and foreign volunteers must take care not to include books which grossly offend local standards.

Prior to purchasing books for a collection, the librarian should make a survey of reader interests. Most likely, the young readers will request books on sex education, sports and personal defence, mysteries, science fiction, and adventure stories. At least half of a library's collection should consist of books selected by the children. The other half may be selected by the librarian. A good portion of these should be of topical interest to the children of that particular region of the world, including the classics of their national literature. Others should have a general applicability to subjects which are studied in school or vocational programs in the center. The collection should also contain a fair amount of reference materials and handbooks for use by the program staff.

The physical appearance of a book is almost as important as what it contains. Books should be attractively packaged and easy to read, with large print, lots of illustrations, and not too many pages. Paperbacks are ideal for children's libraries, because they usually offer alluring covers, are inexpensive, and are less intimidating than hard cover books.

Picture magazines are also useful for stimulating reading interest. Although their content is usually not of very high standards, they are quite effective at engaging the attention of casual readers. Young people are universally intrigued by the personal lives of their favorite music and television stars. Even if a child is unable to read, her attention will be drawn to the text accompanying the pictures. The text may consist solely of gossip, but the important thing is that she will want to know what is written there -- an important incentive for learning to read. Once children become experienced at reading, teachers can help them refine their tastes. But the first step is to instill them with a desire to read, whatever the means.

Other resources to include in the learning center are wall maps and decorative hangings, musical recordings and recording equipment, materials for arts and crafts, science exhibits, fish tanks and vivariums, typewriters, board games, and any other learning tools. The development of the resource center can be an expensive proposition for any project. Materials which can be constructed in the center are preferable to manufactured articles. Some volunteers have also been successful at soliciting donations from publishing houses and manufacturers of learning aids. The ICE publication "Sources of Books and Periodicals" (# RE007) contains further information on obtaining books for project libraries.

Reading Programs

Once a resource center has been established in a project, the educational staff will probably want to develop a reading incentive program. A fairly large collection of books, which appeal to a variety of age groups and personal tastes is required for the reading program. Fiction books are most appropriate for such programs, but juvenile biographies and some histories can also be included on the reading list.

The reading incentive program should recognize achievement with tangible rewards, such as token money, gift books, or participation in special activities, like a field trip or group outing. Personal recognition is equally important: readers who complete or participate in the program receive certificates of achievement, to be issued at a special ceremony.

At the Centro San Juan Bosco, reading achievement was recorded on charts, which were hung on the walls of the library. During the first year of the reading program, children were given a map of Honduras to hang on the wall. For each book read, they received a cut-out state to attach to the map. Each child who filled his map with all eighteen departments of Honduras, received a reward and certificate of achievement. In the second year of the program, children were given a new chart, containing twenty-one doors, which were opened one at a time for every book they read. The doors were drawn to resemble books, and each one was titled to represent a particular work of Honduran literature. A prize was indicated beneath each door (small amounts of money, movie tickets, books, etc.), and these were opened during special ceremonies, which were as exciting and entertaining as they were reinforcing.

The reading incentive program at the Centro San Juan Bosco generated much enthusiasm among the children who participated. Many of them began to read for pleasure, without regard to the token reinforcement. As their reading skills improved, they also began to tackle works of a higher literary standard. The most popular book during the second year of the incentive program was James Fennimore Cooper's

Pathfinder, followed closely by Mickey Spillane's *I, The Jury*. The use of the book charts representing classic works of Honduran fiction also served to interest youths in their native literature. Foreign authors, such as Fennimore Cooper, Scheherazade, and Harriet Beeker Stowe were considerably more popular than the classic native writers. Honduran authors tend not to write for a juvenile readership. But the teachers of the program were careful to promote several of the more accessible home-grown works, and were able to interest a small group of older youths in their national literature.

The reading program helped make the resource center one of the favorite hang-outs at the Centro San Juan Bosco. It also exposed these children to the many joys and benefits of reading. For more information on the development of reading incentive programs I strongly recommend Daniel Fader's *Hooked On Books*.

Fund Raising

There is some doubt as to whether fund raising is an appropriate activity for Peace Corps volunteers. Volunteers are clearly discouraged from engaging in any activities which are likely to be perceived as direct economic aid to the community or sponsoring agencies. But the availability of SPA grants (Small Projects Assistance) and Peace Corps Partnerships may be regarded as a sign of tacit approval for certain kinds of fund-raising activities. The official policy on fund-raising activities for volunteers continues to be something of a grey area. My own interpretation of the policy has been that such activities are acceptable, providing 1) this is not the principal role of a volunteer, 2) the fund-raising activity will enable the volunteer to function more effectively in her primary role as a community development worker or technical advisor, and 3) the activity does not involve large sums of money.

The one thing that all youth centers seem to have in common is that they operate on very meager budgets. All these centers require more money, in order to help more children, improve their services, and adequately staff their facilities. These needs cannot be satisfied by small, one-time grants, such as those provided by SPA. They require long-term funding commitments from independent agencies. Many centers also rely on donations in kind (food, clothing, medicines), and large, single-issue grants for project development and construction of facilities.

Peace Corps youth promoters are often asked to help raise money for the programs where they work. This happens because Peace Corps volunteers are thought to be connected in the international development community. Rightly or wrongly, administrators may believe that volunteers have easy access to funding sources. Volunteers may contribute to this image by promoting the availability of SPA grants or Peace Corps Partners monies.

There is a strong temptation for volunteers, at the beginning of their service, to comply with requests for funding assistance. Obtaining extra money for a project is one way of gaining instant credibility and respect. The additional funding is also useful for the development of any new projects the volunteer plans to initiate during her service.

The development of new funding sources by the volunteer may have positive implications for the center and its children. But fund raising is a risky proposition for Peace Corps volunteers -- especially at the beginning of service. Volunteers who consent to raising money for a project often create false expectations: for both themselves and others who follow in their footsteps. Fund raising also entails an ethical responsibility to the donor -- to ensure that the money is used as intended. But in most cases, the volunteer is only an intermediary between the funding agency and project administration, with no real authority to supervise the disposal of donated monies.

Involvement in fund-raising activities is a highly frustrating experience for most volunteers who attempt it. Because they speak English, volunteers are often called on to write the grant proposals and handle all the follow-up correspondence with American agencies. Donors usually expect to receive letters of acknowledgment, photographs, progress reports, and project evaluations. These time-consuming chores usually fall into the hands of English-speaking volunteers. Fund raising has its rewards -- increased status and credibility -- but these are often paid for with a great deal of effort and aggravation.

Some volunteers will engage in this activity, despite the attendant risks and aggravations (I certainly did during my service with the Centro San Juan Bosco). For these volunteers, the following guidelines may be of use:

1) always work with counterparts; encourage an administrator or director of the program to get involved in the fund-raising process; help them develop strategies, but let them do the actual work of solicitation and follow-up reporting.
2) involve youths in the fund-raising process: this is a highly effective method of gaining support for your project; many small donors and agencies cannot resist appeals made by children; youths can handle much of the correspondence between the project and funding agencies.
3) inform the director of the program of all its responsibilities concerning the acceptance of money from funding sources; make sure the project knows what it is getting into when soliciting funds from particular donors.

4) encourage counterparts to look for funding within the community as well as from outside sources.
5) try to avoid responsibility for the translation of correspondence between a project and its funders.
6) avoid placing yourself in the position of overseeing the use of monies.
7) guard that the program does not become dependent on your money-raising abilities.
8) never personally accept money or gifts in kind from donors.
9) keep a low profile as regards your efforts in this area.
10) never consent to raise money for a project if there is expectation that it may be misused.
11) avoid involvement in large funding projects.

Environmental Education

Some of my best experiences as a Youth Development volunteer had to do with sharing the wonders of nature with the children of my project. I was fortunate enough to have an assignment on the lush northern coast of Honduras, nearby a tropical forest and botanical garden. As often as possible, I would lead groups of children into the forest to explore the natural surroundings and delight in the wonders of this tropical paradise verging on the Caribbean. These experiences were of mutual benefit to the children and myself. Together, we gained a healthy respect for our natural environment, and also learned something about ourselves and our proper place in this world.

The preservation and management of our natural resources is a major priority of Peace Corps volunteers. Most of the planet's tropical forests are located in the most underdeveloped regions of the world. Developing nations may view the forests as an economic resource, which can help their people out of poverty. The consequences for humanity would be catastrophic should these forests ever be destroyed. On the other hand, the lands they occupy could be used to feed the hungry of the world. Peace Corps volunteers around the globe are caught up in this struggle to balance the needs of humanity with the needs of the planet.

If human beings are to survive as a species, we must reach a compromise solution with the planet we inhabit. When we witness the destruction occurring in the Amazon region and other areas of the world, it becomes apparent that we are still a long ways from making this commitment. Part of the problem lies in the fact that many people fail to appreciate the gravity of this situation. Intensive efforts in environmental education can do a great deal to rectify this regrettable state of affairs.

It may be too late to re-educate the current leaders of the world on the necessity of environmental reforms, but today's youths may be more receptive to these ideas. Third World youths in particular need to understand what is happening to the planet, because they will be tomorrow's leaders and policy-makers. For this reason, projects in environmental education are a highly appropriate activity for Youth Development volunteers.

Environmental education begins by teaching young people that nature is more than just a resource. Nature includes the human species, too (though we have destroyed much of the natural world). Thus, the first objective of environmental education is to correct the mistaken belief that humanity is separate form nature. We must frame the problem in different terms from the traditional dichotomy of 'Man versus Nature', and realize that the interests of humanity are also served by the interests of nature. The purpose of environmental education is to demonstrate the truth of this important proposition.

A program for environmental education should begin by exposing young people to the wonders of the natural world. In the initial phases, it does little good to preach to youths about the destruction of the tropical forests. They must first be able to appreciate the value of these forests, before they can think about the need for saving them. This appreciation comes, not from lectures on the ozone layer and endangered species, but from direct experience of the natural environment. Young people must be taught to enjoy the world of nature, so they can feel they have an interest in preserving it from destruction. This kind of enjoyment can be experienced in two ways: 1) by taking children into the world of nature, where they can explore its wonders and appreciate its beauty; 2) by bringing back a part of that world to the human habitat, where it can be studied and carefully examined.

Nature study is a fundamental component of any program in environmental education. To some extent, the study process can occur inside a classroom -- reading about the food chain and learning species identification from graphic materials. But these phenomena are best studied in the natural environment, where they can be observed in action. The major part of the program in environmental education should therefore be conducted in the field -- guiding youths through the natural habitat and helping them appreciate its many wonders. Some appropriate activities for field excursions are:

> blind trails: A rope-guided tour through a wooded area. Children are blindfolded and instructed to follow the path of a rope, which has been tied between trees, rocks and other objects. The course should lead them through a variety of different habitats: a massive tree, moss-covered log, patch of ferns, and shallow brook. The purpose of this exercise is to sensitize children to the sounds, smells, and feel of a forest.

micro hikes: Children are provided with a magnifying glass and instructed to crawl along a five-foot stretch of ground, observing every little thing encountered in their path: leaves, blades of grass, tiny insects.

still hunting: Direct children to different areas of a woods and instruct them to find a sitting place, where they should remain very still for a period of time, observing the life of the forest. At the end of the exercise, children regroup to discuss the different animals they have "captured".

scavenger hunts: Present children with a scavenger list of items for them to find in the forest: a bone, fragment of a bird shell, five pieces of man-made litter, seed, etc.

stalking: This is an activity for older children who have developed a fair amount of outdoor skills. Youths are taught how to muffle their clothing, cover their scent and camouflage their bodies, the better to spot and stalk wild animals.

stalking man-made litter: Children are instructed to collect all the made-made litter in a given area. Apart from the obvious advantage of cleaning up the environment, this exercise increases there perceptual awareness and educates them about our negative impact on the environment.

The role of environmental educators is to teach children to appreciate the wonders of nature. They can accomplish this by:

1) sharing their feelings about nature, as well as their knowledge, facts, and experiences.
2) teaching them receptivity and sensitivity skills: showing them how to be alert to the wonders of nature.
3) focusing their attention on the details of the natural world.
4) allowing them to look and experience, first; discuss and comment, second.

Nature study is useful for developing outdoors skills -- such as stalking, species identification and orienteering -- and instructing children in the concepts of interdependence, predation, and species preservation. It can also help children develop personal skills, such as sensory awareness and social responsibility. An activity such as stalking teaches patience, perceptual sensitivity, and physical grace. Still hunting teaches calm and relaxation. as well as an aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment. Nature study can make children less fearful of the world they live in and more aware of the requirements for life on this planet.

Part of nature study can occur in the classroom or laboratory -- through the use of reference materials, indoor exercises, and examination of specimens collected in the wild. Some environmentalists will object to this latter practice on the grounds that it is disruptive to the natural environment. I believe that the examination of "nature" in the laboratory setting is an indispensable component of the educational process. Collection of specimens, living or otherwise, should be conducted in a conscientious manner, so as not to disrupt the natural habitat. But this procedure is very useful for generating interest in the world of nature and teaching concepts of environmental balance.

The resource center at the Centro San Juan Bosco contained a small nature museum, which was prepared by the youths. Exhibits included seashells, rocks, sections of wood, and other objects. We also conducted several wild-fish collecting expeditions. The fish we caught were brought back to the center and maintained in a small aquarium. One environmentalist I spoke with objected to this practice, on the grounds that it was cruel to the fish and that it encouraged children to believe that the natural resources of the world exist for humanity's pleasure. While this may have been true to some extent, I believe that the advantages of our aquarium project far outweighed the negative effects.

Learning to maintain a tropical aquarium is often an exercise in killing fish; and in the beginning stages of this project, we killed quite a few. But this made us wonder what we were doing wrong. In order to better maintain our specimens and be able to enjoy their beauty, we began to study such phenomena as the nitrogen cycle, oxygenation, and principles of biological filtration. This in turn, led to a better understanding of the harmful effects of chemical fertilization and human waste disposal on the environment. The aquarium project created a greater awareness of our environmental responsibilities. Close observation of these specimens in a man-made environment also helped the children understand the basic concepts of territoriality, predation, and reproduction. They also learned that it was possible for human beings to manipulate a habitat to the benefit of a species, rather than its detriment. Once we learned the basics about fishkeeping, the specimens we collected lived a longer, healthier life than they normally would have in the wild.

Environmental education begins with teaching children that human beings can co-exist with other species of the planet. Whether in the classroom or the natural habitat, children should be helped to appreciate the wonders of nature, and understand that they, too, are one of those wonders.

Clubhouses

Youth Development volunteers who work in institutional settings will have observed that a high percentage of the 'street kids' who enter residential centers leave the program before they come of age. Many of them return to the streets and are often readmitted to the center (or other institutions in the country) several times. These children have a hard time making the adjustment from street life to the institution. Living on the street, children become accustomed to a great deal of personal freedom. In the residential setting their freedom is restricted. They are expected to attend school, comply with regulations, and submit to a regimented routine of activities. The high recidivism rate of youths who have lived in the street for an extended length of time is largely a result of adjustment problems.

The admission of youngsters just off the street is also disruptive of life in the center. Recently admitted street kids may present behavioral problems, intimidate younger children, and tempt others to disregard the rules. Programs which have a continuous intake of children from the street may find that their residences are in a state of constant upheaval.

In Chapter Three, "Institutionalization and Its Effects", I suggested some ways of improving institutional environments, to make them more acceptable to this group of children. In addition, it may be necessary to modify the intake procedures of some centers. Transitions from the street to institution must be handled so that street kids have time to adjust to the new order of the program residence. This can be done by establishing a 'clubhouse' program.

The intake process at the Centro San Juan Bosco provided two distinct routes for admission to the residential program: 1) immediate admission of children not of the street by referral from another source (i.e., recently abandoned or abused children), or 2) gradual admission of long-time street kids through 'El Club', a loosely structured daytime program. El Club was located in the center of town, separate from the main residences of the Centro. All children who either lived or worked in the street were welcome to attend during the day. Services at El Club included the provision of two meals daily, access to medical care, recreational activities, and educational support for children attending school. Members of El Club also received voluntary instruction in daily living skills and moral guidance from the adult staff.

El Club was attended by two types of children: 1) poor working children who lived at home and required basic care services, and 2) street kids who desired a place to hang-out and eat an occasional meal. Of this latter group, many had no expectations of changing their way of life. They used the facility purely as a temporary refuge. But many of the other street kids attending this program hoped to be admitted into the residences of the Centro San Juan Bosco. For them, El Club was a transitional program for admission to the center.

The advantage of a clubhouse program such as El Club is that it permits the staff of a center to observe the child in a loosely structured setting, prior to admission in the residential program. It also enables them to work with the child and prepare him for this radical transition. Candidates for admission initially become familiar with the staff of a program on a friendly, helping basis, rather than an authoritarian one. They are also familiarized with the residential program through regular visits to the center. This process of gradual familiarization with the program and its staff makes for smoother transitions. It also lets the child know what to expect of life in residence.

The clubhouse environment should be attractive to street kids. It should include recreational facilities and be staffed with friendly, concerned adults. In this way, street children who have no intention of entering the residential program may be enticed into accepting help from the center -- either in residence or on the street. The clubhouse can also provide valuable services to working children who live at home. The provision of these services -- health care, nutrition, and education -- may prevent many of them from gravitating to the lifestyle of the street.

'Child to Child'

During my time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras, a nationwide initiative called Niño a Niño was under development. "Child to Child", as it is called in English, is similar in concept to Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the United States, but with some important differences. Instead of pairing adult volunteers with inner city youths, Niño a Niño works with real pairs of siblings, helping older youths to be "big sisters" or "big brothers" to their younger siblings.

In most developing nations older children are often charged with the care of their younger siblings. Girls, especially, may cook for their siblings, dress them, cleanse them, help them with their schoolwork, and even provide them with basic forms of health care. In short, they perform the functions of a parent. This happens because parents of families work long hours during the day, or because they lack these basic parenting skills (due to emotional incompetence, alcoholism, or simple irresponsibility).

Niño a Niño recognizes the phenomenon of child caretakers among impoverished families, and seeks to support them and better prepare them for this role. The program is usually implemented through the public schools (though it is also within the scope of most youth centers to operate). Students above the age of ten are targeted for the program. They receive instruction in basic caretaking skills (how to recognize health problems in infants, obtaining medical care, preparing food, early stimulation and developmental play, moral supervision, and a number of other important functions). The instruction is provided by teachers at the school, according to a programed lesson plan, which is outlined in the Niño a Niño information packet. This packet also includes easy to understand, illustrated hand-outs for the older siblings.

Although the Niño a Niño program may seem to place a high degree of responsibility on the older siblings of a family, the truth is that this responsibility has already been thrust upon them. Niño a Niño seeks to alleviate a part of the burden by giving them moral support, as well as practical information to help them in the role of family caretaker. While the program is typically implemented in the public schools, it is an equally appropriate activity for youth centers -- especially those with "clubhouse" programs. In those countries where this model is not currently in place, youth promoters may also be of service by advocating for a nationwide plan.

RESOURCE LIST FOR YOUTH PROMOTERS

Child Development and Behavior

Burns, Robert. *Child Development: A Text for Caring Professionals*. 1986. Nichols Publishing Co.,

Standard social work text for those who work with children.

Elkind, David. *All Grown Up & No Place To Go*. 1984. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. 232 pp., $9.95.

Deals with the effects of stress and changing social values on adolescents. Mainly pertains to American youth, but has implications for all cultures undergoing rapid change. Good for understanding thought processes and coping mechanisms of adolescents.

Ginott, Haim. *Between Parent & Child*. 1965. Macmillan Company, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022. 223 pp.

Very easy to read but highly instructive book on effective communication with children. Lots of examples of positive reinforcement, illustrated in numerous sample dialogues.

Ginott, Haim. *Between Parent & Teenager*. 1969. The Macmillan Company, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022. 256 pp., $5.95.

Same as above, but dealing with older children.

Leiberman, Florence. *Social Work with Children*. 1979. Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. 344 pp.

A text for students of social work on child development and behavior. Covers all stages of development from birth through adolescence, with chapters on learning problems, depression and aggression, and disorders of childhood, and how they are treated.

Murphy, L.B. and Alice Moriarty. *Vulnerability, Coping and Growth: From Infancy to Adolescence*. 1976. Yale University Press. 460 pp.

Excellent book on child development, personality and coping devices. Very good for understanding why children develop and behave the way they do.

Mussen, P., J. Kagan and J.J. Conger. *Readings In Child Development and Personality*. 1970. Harper & Row Publications, Inc., 49 East 33rd St., New York, NY 10016. 595pp.

College textbook covering most apsects of personality and development in children and adolescents. Includes information on language and cognitive development, the socialization process, behavior modification, schooling, teenage sexuality, delinquency and identity formation. Mainly theoretical.

Phillips, John. Piaget's Theory: A Primer. 1981. W.H. Freeman and Co. 192 pp.

Easy to understand explanations of Piaget's theories of cognitive functioning in children and adolescents. Purely theoretical, with very few practical applications, but very useful for understanding why children behave and think the way they do. Information as presented here is much easier to read than in the original.

Redl, Fritz. The Aggressive Child. 1963. The Free Press of Glencoe.

See following entry.

Redl, Fritz. Children Who Hate: Disorganization and Breakdown of Behavior Controls. 1951. The Free Press, New York. 253 pp.

Analysis of maladapted behavior in children and adolescents. Mostly theoretical, but easy to read and useful for understanding the so-called 'acting out' behaviors of youth.

Counseling and Social Work With Children

Apter, Steven and Jane Conoley. Childhood Behavior Disorders and Emotional Disturbance. 1984. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632. 325 pp.

'Ecological perspective' on childhood behavior disorders -- an integrative approach to helping troubled children. Includes profiles on all the major conceptual models -- psychodynamic, behavioral, biophysical, sociological, and countertheory -- and attempts to bring them all together in a single unifying approach to childhood behavior problems. Though written mainly for teachers, it is relevant to all child care professionals. Focuses on specific skills and strategies, as well as theoretical orientations.

Brammer, Lawrence. The Helping Relationship: Process and Skills. 1973. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Engelwood Cliffs, NJ 07632. 174 pp..

Short, easy to read, informative textbook on basic counseling skills. Includes chapters on helping skills for loss and crisis, positive action, and behavior change. Exercises for developing attending, paraphrasing, and desensitization skills.

Crompton, Margaret. Respecting Children: Social Work with Young People. 1980. Edward Arnold, Ltd. 41 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DQ. 246 pp. L.4.95

Practical book on social work skills with children and adolescence. Emphasizes communication between adults and children and various methods of play, art and music therapy.

Fulcher, Leon and Frank Ainsworth (eds.). Group Care Practice with Children. 1985. Tavistock Publications Ltd., 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001. 284 pp.

Short collection of essays on residential care of children. Includes chapters on the "culture" of group care; the struggle to reconcile the primary care requirements of children with organizational demands of the institution; the development of common goals and practice methods for staff of disparate backgrounds and orientation; personal care and treatment planning; activity programming; supported education; and influences of resident groups on program functioning. Although written for and about group care programs of the United States and Europe, most of the essays in this collection are still very relevant to the puroposes of residential programs in the developing world.

Gardner, William. Children with Learning and Behavior Problems: A Behavior Management Approach. 1978. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 470 Atlantic Ave., Boston, MA 02210. 433 pp.

Textbook on behavior management for children with learning and behavior problems. Covers all the basics of behavior modification: positive reinforcement, punishment, changing the stimulus environment, time-out, self-management, and more. Includes descriptions of specific learning and behavior problems, with practical guidelines for their treatment.

Hall, Edward. The Silent Language. 1959. Doubleday & Company, Inc. 217 pp. $5.95.

Helpful book for cross-cultural counselors about non-verbal communication. Deals with concepts of **time** and **space** as tools of communication, with in-depth treatment of their various cultural forms.

Ivey, Allen. Counseling and Psychotherapy: Integrating Skills, Theory and Practice. 1980. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632. 477 pp., $36.00.

An integration of skills and theory in helping relationships. Outlines of various approaches to counseling and psychotherapy. Much information on practice skills and cultural 'intentionality'.

Ivey, Allen. *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling*. 1983. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Monterey, CA. 324 pp., $19.00.

Practical guide to the 'microskills' approach to counseling. Explores the concept of 'intentionality' in helping relationships. Lots of exercises for students of counseling. Very helpful for improving one's listening, attending, and influencing skills.

Jewett, Claudia. *Helping Children Cope With Loss and Separation*. 1982. Harvard Common Press, The Common, P.O. Box 355, Harvard, MA 01451. 146 pp., $11.95.

Easily read book on early loss and separation, their effect on a child's self-esteem and self-control, with practical advice on helping children cope with loss, and deal with sadness, anger, and aggression. Much useful information included in this short book, and practical advice for explaining loss to young children.

McAuley, Roger and Patricia. *Child Behavior Problems: An Empirical Approach to Management*. 1977. The Free Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Standard text on assessment, planning and intervention for behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Practical guidelines for assessing behavior and planning interventions. Includes chapters on contingency management, points systems, bargaining, and contracting.

Powers, Douglas. *Creating Environments for Troubled Children*. 1980. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C. 182 pp.

Well written book on the creation of therapeutic environments for the treatment and care of troubled children. Includes chapters on program management, crisis intervention, staff development, family work, recreation, communication, child development, and childhood disorders.

Rogers, Carl. *Client-Centered Therapy*. 1951. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 560 pp.

Classic groundwork text for Rogerian psychotherapy and counseling techniques: the helping relationship from the client's point of view.

Schaefer, Charles and Arthur Swanson (eds.). *Children in Residential Care: Critical Issues in Treatment*. 1988. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, Inc., 115 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003. 294 pp.

Collection of essays on residential group care; separation and loss in childhood; crisis intervention; sexual acting out; family work; child behavior management; and peer culture. The second half of the book is devoted to management issues, such as permanency planning, quality assurance and evaluation, staff management, and the development of a therapeutic environment. Covers most of the basics of residential care for children.

Westman, Jack. *Child Advocacy: New Professional Roles for Helping Families*. 1979. The Free Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. 431 pp.

Guide for child care professionals on advocating for children's rights and access to social services. This book mainly deals with advocacy issues in the United States, in education, the legal system, and health care. There is also a good deal of information on advocacy strategies and the development of public policy for the treatment and care of children in need.

Wolins, Martin. *Successful Group Care: Explorations in the Powerful Environment*. 1974. Aldine Publishing Company, 529 South Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605. 463 pp.

Collection of essays dealing with the ethical and practical issues of institutionalized children and adolescents.

Education

Fader, Daniel. *The New Hooked On Books*. 1976. G.E. Putnam's Sons, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. 321 pp., $8.95.

Excellent book on the development of reading incentive programs for inner city youths. Includes many useful ideas for the development of library reading programs.

Guerin, Gilbert and Arlee Maier. *Informal Assessment in Education*. 1983. Mayfield Publishing Co., 285 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301. 418 pp., $16.95.

Practical guidelines for performing informal assessments (i.e., observations of typical behaviors, dialogue with students, and examination of student products), in the classroom. Describes assessment skills teachers (and other professionals), can use to identify learning problems, evaluate the instructional setting, and promote student-teacher interaction. Available from ICE (#ED105).

Silberman, Charles (ed.). *The Open Classroom Reader*. 1973. Random House, Inc., New York. 789 pp.

Large collection of essays on educational innovation. Includes sections on the aims of education, roles of teachers, and school curriculum. Chapters on the use of concrete materials and building your own classroom equipment may be of particular interest to Youth Development volunteers.

Teaching Through Adventure: A Practical Approach. 1976. Project Adventure, P.O. Box 157, Hamilton, MA 01936. 97 pp., $4.50.

Innovative approach to school field trips and outings. Includes descriptions of such activities as "mud walks", "texture walks" amd "urban exploration". These are mostly outdoors, action-oriented activities, but also includes some activities for developing writing skills, expression, problem-solving skills, discovery and adventure in general.

Recreation and Leisure Skills

Beckwith, Jay. Make Your Backyard More Interesting Than TV. 1980. McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. 117 pp., $6.95.

Handbook for constructing backyard playgrounds, appropriate for youth centers. Many useful diagrams and informative accompanying text. Includes information on the development of leisure skills for children.

Cornell, Joseph. Sharing Nature With Children. 1979. Dawn Publications, 14618 Tyler Foote Road, Nevada City, CA 95959. 143 pp., $6.95.

Excellent little book on fun activities for exploring and enjoying nature with children. Very good as a teacher's guide; Youth Development volunteers will enjoy performing many of these activities with the children of their project.

Fluegelman, Andrew. The New Games Book. 1976. Dolphin Books/Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY. 192 pp., $7.95

Descriptions of games that encourage participation, a sense of community and the creative use of energy. An alternative to competitive athletics, based on a philosophay of play as a community strengthening activity. Includes descriptions of many active games for two or more players, including some team activities.

Fluegelman, Andrew. More New Games! 1981. Dolphin Books/Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY. 191 pp., $7.95.

More of the same.

Friedberg, Paul. Handcrafted Playgrounds: Designs You Can Build Yourself. 1975. Random House, Inc., New York, NY 10022. 123 pp., $12.95.

Sketchbook of playground ideas, using wood, rope and tires. More than one-hundred diagrams, including plans for playground equipment which can be be constructed in any center.

Hogan, Paul. *Playgrounds for Free: The Utilization of Used and Surplus Materials*. 1974. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 02114. 252 pp. $9.95

Oppenheim, Joanne. *Kids and Play*. 1984. Ballentine Books, New York. 308 pp.

Handbook on play for children, ages zero through eleven. An instructive outline on the 'developmental interaction' approach, developed by the Bank Street College of Education. Includes information on the role of play in childhood development, and ineraction with educators, parents and peers. Descriptions of age-appropriate play activities and materials, with illustrations and diagrams.

Orlick, Terry. *The Cooperative Sports & Game Book: Challenge Without Competition*. 1978. Pantheon Books, New York. 129 pp., $8.95.

Complement to the 'New Games' books, appropriate for ages three through twelve. Includes a section on cooperative games from around the world.

Rohnke, Karl. *Cowtails and Cobras: A Guide to Ropes Courses, Initiative Games, and Other Adventure Activities*. 1977. Project Adventure, 775 Bay Road, Hamilton, MA 01936. 157 pp., $6.50.

Group leaders guide on the construction and use of ropes courses, initiative games, and adventure activities. Profusely illustrated, with many diagrams of ropes courses and other outdoor recreation equipment. I much prefer this book to the New Games books. Highly recommended.

Sobel, Jeffrey. *Everybody Wins: 395 Cooperative Games for Young Children*. 1983. Walker and Company, 720 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019. 146 pp., $12.95.

Descriptions of 393 non-competetive games for children; a younger version of the 'New Games' concept.

Van Der Smissen, Betty and Oswald Goering. *A Leader's Guide to Nature-Oriented Activities*. 1977. The Iowa State University Press, Ames, IA. 254 pp.

Teachers guide to outdoor nature activities for children, including nature crafts, nature games, outdoor living skills, and adventure-outing sports.

Other Topics

Aarons, Audrey and Hugh Hawes. *Child to Child*. 1979. ICE #HE002.

Currie, Dorothy. How to Organize a Children's Library. 1965. Oceana Publications, Inc., Dobbs Ferry, NY. 184 pp.

Useful, non-technical book on organizing children's libraries. Includes information on assembling the book collection, processing and classifying books, and the development of a card catalog. I have also seen copies of this book in Spanish.

Evaluation Sourcebook for Private and Voluntary Organizations. 1984. American Council of Voluntary Agencencies for Foreign Service, 200 Park Ave., New York, NY 10003. 166pp., $6.00.

Practical, well organized guide on simple techniques of program evaluation for social service agencies in the developing world. Useful resource for program administrators, with information on the primary "persuassions" of program evaluation and various methods for gathering information. Available from ICE (#CD019).

Rodale, Robert. Basic Book of Organic Gardening. 1971. ICE #AG069.

If you have only one book on gardening in your collection, this should be it.

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